

THE CHRONOTOPE OF WALKING IN THE FILMS OF ANDREA ARNOLD

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Abstract

This thesis proposes that the act of walking functions as a dominant chronotope in the work of British filmmaker Andrea Arnold. Using Mikhail Bakhtin's concept (1988), it demonstrates how walking mobilises a reading of the landscape and the female body that articulates their combined resistance to hegemonic narratives of exclusion and deprivation. Furthermore, by examining its chronotopicity, the function of walking as a discrete element is analysed to reveal its narrative, aesthetic, and contextual significance.

Whilst previous studies of the cinematic flâneuse are restricted mainly to European and art-house cinema and their middle class protagonists, this thesis focuses attention on less affluent female characters whose walking takes place not in the metropolis but in the edgelands, suburbs, and social housing estates that constitute the contemporary built environment, along with Arnold's depiction of the harsh rural landscape of nineteenth-century Yorkshire in *Wuthering Heights* (2011).

This is a study of walking as depicted in Arnold's cinematic output, along with the three short films with which she began her career, all of which focus upon strong female characters living in areas of economic and social deprivation. From a feminist perspective, her films are "power-to" narratives (Sutherland and Feltey, 2017) that show how female agency is predicated on emotional, and practical, resilience, and Arnold demonstrates this agency by foregrounding her protagonists' physical and geographical mobility, using walking as their dominant mode of movement.

The textual analysis draws on Laura U. Mark's theories of haptic cinema to examine Arnold's visual style, combined with a reading of Michel de Certeau whose work emphasises walking as a form of tactile, urban remapping. From this, a new way of interpreting women and walking emerges, and the term 'haptic flâneuse' is

proposed to describe women's sensory investigations, explorations, and encounters with the new urban landscape.

The conclusions drawn show how walking scenes provide opportunities for female agency, and that such journeys function in excess of their narrative significance, creating an interpretative space to examine the structural, aesthetic, and contextual elements of the films. In this way, the walking chronotope acts as a lens through which Arnold's work can be interpreted. In summary, this thesis contributes to knowledge in three ways: by providing the first detailed study of walking in Arnold's oeuvre; by proposing the figure of the haptic flâneuse as a way of thinking about the experiences of women who walk in marginalised spaces; and by demonstrating how a chronotopic reading of walking scenes elevates them from a narrative means to an end to significant film elements in themselves.

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“How can something as simple and mundane and commonplace as walking be a social barometer to show us the way our society is?”

Garnette Cadogan (in Abadi, 2018: n.p.)

Introduction

The subject of women walking is a common theme in the films of Andrea Arnold, and its significance is evident in a number of ways: the frequency with which it occurs throughout each narrative; the intimacy created by the kinetic cinematography; and the varied geographical spaces mapped out by these characters as they journey across the filmic landscapes.

Walking connects Arnold's female protagonists to a tradition of cinematic *flânerie*. However, unlike the privileged and affluent *flâneuse* of heritage film or European new-wave cinema, Arnold's women appear as marginalised and exploited individuals for whom walking is a functional necessity. Furthermore, it takes place not in modern metropolises but in the contemporary built environment characterised in Arnold's films by edgelands and areas of social deprivation. Thus, crucially, in place of a *flânerie* that functions at one end of the scale as a symbol of affected solipsism, and at the other as a means of radical subversion, I argue that Arnold's *flâneuses*, despite their disadvantages and deprivations, transform themselves and the disparate landscapes through which they walk and, at the same time, encourage audiences to contemplate, to question, and to modify their attitudes towards these hitherto negatively coded spaces.

This thesis therefore considers why we should be concerned with the act of walking in Arnold's films which are, primarily, about human relationships and the social, physical, and emotional constraints placed upon women. Indeed, why is walking, which in these films does not take on heroic proportions, but is presented as an everyday act, so vital to an understanding of Arnold's work? These are the substantive questions which frame this thesis, and, by deploying Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the *chronotope* (1988) as an overarching framework with which to

examine Arnold's films, I demonstrate how walking mobilises a reading of the landscape and the female body that articulates their combined resistance to hegemonic narratives of exclusion and deprivation. Furthermore, in order to negotiate this challenge, I ask also how walking contributes to the complexities of narrative and character development; how perspectives of the films' geographical locations are transformed by walking; how questions of gender, class, and race are mediated through walking; and, finally, how Arnold's cinematic rendering of place and mobility contributes to a new appreciation of the complex figure of the flâneuse.

To answer these questions, this thesis combines a formalist approach to the films with a consideration of their social, cultural, and historical contexts, all of which are crystallised through the concept of the chronotope. For Bakhtin, the chronotope is a centripetal unifying force which functions as an intense field of aesthetic, narrative, and contextual signification with which to analyse the temporal and spatial aspects of a text, and it is used here alongside theories of cinematic affect, particularly the work of Laura U. Marks (2000), to consider how Arnold's new flâneuses help to transform our understanding of the significance of walking in contemporary mainstream cinema. Indeed, this thesis offers a new interpretation of the complex and often contradictory figure of the flâneuse, and, in place of the wandering bourgeois whose encounters with urban space are founded upon a privileged gaze, this study proposes the term 'haptic flâneuse'. The concept of the haptic flâneuse is central to the walking chronotope and helps to crystallise a number of important elements. Firstly, by foregrounding character, it focuses attention on walking as a vital narrative device; secondly, it defines the ways in which Arnold's female protagonists interact with the built environment, that is, through tactile

experience; and, thirdly, it describes Arnold's mode of filming which stimulates a sensory response to her cinematic world.

Even though Arnold admits that the inclusion of walking scenes is a "conscious decision on [her] part" (Bates, 2017: n.p.), there has been little scholarly attention devoted to walking as a specific motif across all her work. Sara Smyth (2019) and Sue Thornham (2019), for example, limit their references to walking to one film in their respective analyses of *Fish Tank* (2009) and *Red Road* (2006). This is therefore the first complete analysis of walking as it appears in Arnold's oeuvre, and one which functions in three ways: firstly, through the formulation of walking as a particular chronotope, it provides an approach to Arnold's work hitherto neglected; secondly, by positing the chronotope as a means of understanding the narrative and contextual significance of walking, it demonstrates the importance to Film Studies of examining walking as a discrete element; and, finally, it promotes a new way of interpreting the cinematic flâneuse.

In identifying walking as a chronotope, this thesis also shifts the discussion of cinematic walking away from its function as a "reflection of interiority" (Smyth, 2019: 116). Even though walking scenes can externalise the internal conflicts of character and character psychology (evoking the nuances of mood through the depiction of setting, for example), I am also concerned with the explicit structural importance of walking. By this, I mean the ways in which such scenes contribute to the story dynamics, occurring as they do at important hinge-points in Arnold's films and thus shifting the trajectories of both plot and character development. Considering each of Arnold's films in detail allows me to analyse and evaluate the number and duration of walking scenes, how they are positioned within the story arc, and how they contribute to meaning. Indeed, many of the scenes are considerable in length which

makes possible a thorough evaluation of the inter-relationships between the elements of narrative, character, and landscape.

Throughout this thesis, the chronotopicity of walking is considered alongside theories of haptic visuality. I therefore follow the work of Marks (2000), itself derived from Gilles Deleuze's writings on cinema (1992, 1994). Each walking scene analysed in this study provides what Katharina Lindner refers to as "affective situations" (2012: 209) which are created not only through characters and narrative but also by the cinematography and its evocation of character and setting. Deleuze's concepts of the time- and affection-image will be relevant to aspects of the textual analysis, as will Martin Lefebvre's notion of "intentional landscapes" (2006a) which describes lingering images that invite a reflective mode of viewing, contributing what Marks refers to as a "compassionate involvement" (2000: 141) in the film world. Crucially, these theories provide a framework with which to explore how Arnold's use of framing and composition reveals the inseparability of space and time through a landscape that bears the imprint of historical and political discourse (Massey, 2010).

Through the use of walking scenes, Arnold evokes a powerful sense of place, inviting audiences into her narrative world and encouraging them to question, subvert, and challenge misconceptions and extant prejudices they may have about the people and the locations she portrays. A native of Dartford in Kent, which provides the settings for three of her films (*Dog*, 2001, *Wasp*, 2003, and *Fish Tank*), Arnold rejects the negative perceptions of these places:

It's brutal, it's maybe difficult, it's got a sadness to it, that particular place ... There used to be a lot of industry and it's all closed down ... There used to be a big Ford factory, and great huge car parks. All those car lots are empty now and the grass is growing up in the tarmac. But it's got a wilderness, and huge, great skies. (Arnold in Smith, 2010: n.p.)

Her depiction of this environment celebrates its diversity, but also draws attention to one of the key motifs in her work: that of the juxtaposition of natural elements alongside built-up areas, which I have referred to previously as Arnold's edgeland aesthetic (Hanson, 2015).

The spatial significance of walking is thus explored through a consideration of the edgelands and urban landscapes of Arnold's films. To do this, I draw on the work of Marion Shoard (2002) as well as that of Paul Farley and Michael Symmons Roberts (2012), whose studies of Britain's edgelands reclaim these hitherto negatively coded locations for aesthetic consideration. These writers draw attention to the liminality of these sites, and I consider the edgelands in this study as representing symbolic, as well as geographical, thresholds. This notion of liminality lends these sites the characteristics of what Michel Foucault terms heterotopias (1986), and where these arise in the analysis that follows, I will examine how they contribute to our understanding of space within the context of the walking chronotope.

As noted, walking in Arnold's films eschews the extraordinary, and instead draws attention to its function in everyday situations. Indeed, this study fills a much-gap in Film Studies by focusing on what Jennie Middleton refers to as "the often neglected, unfolding and 'unremarkable' experiences of urban pedestrians" (2010: 576). Furthermore, by concentrating on characters from areas of social deprivation, this study draws attention to walking as often mundane, and, for these characters, quite possibly the only means of transport available: it is, as Charlotte Mathieson suggests, "a necessary and unremarkable fact of working-class life" (2015: 321). This study therefore demonstrates the importance of walking journeys as vital components in each film's narrative, articulating "the everyday walking experiences

of those who navigate, negotiate, and traverse the city streets in their day-to-day lives” (Middleton, 2010: 579), and opening up space to explore the social, historical, and cultural conditions of the time.

I use the term ‘walking’ throughout, but I also recognise different modes and purposes of walking. Becca Voelcker refers to various modalities of cinematic walking which range from the physical to the political, both of which are characterised by the “ambulatory manners in which walking can be filmed” (2018: 14). This study addresses both the physical and the political by examining female experiences of walking alongside the haptic aesthetic used by Arnold to present them. Whilst *flânerie* is associated with metropolitan leisure, walking in Arnold’s films fulfils numerous functions, whether purposeful and destination-led, playful and exploratory, or occupational and quotidian. Consequently, Lauren Elkin’s description of the *flâneuse* as “a determined, resourceful individual” (2016: 23) is apposite to the women in this study, and the notion of the haptic *flâneuse* thus emphasises how Arnold redefines the *flâneuse* for women in film for whom leisured walking is neither appropriate nor convenient.

The haptic *flâneuse*’s vitality and her purposeful intent are disconnected from the leisurely amblings of her nineteenth-century male equivalent or the existential wanderings of European cinematic *flâneuses*, thus enabling a new interpretation of women’s *flânerie* that is more appropriate to the sensory and spatial intimacy of Arnold’s characters. The noun *flâneur* derives from the French word ‘*flâner*’, meaning “to stroll or wander around”. However, in this study, *flâneuse*, as used to refer to Arnold’s characters recalls, the older Norse term, ‘*flana*’, meaning “to act rashly” or to “get into something heedlessly” (van Herk, 2007: 25; Strömqvist, 2016). This older definition captures the integrity of Arnold’s characters more precisely, their *flana-rie*

made explicit by the urgency of their journeys, the energy of the camera that captures their movements, the often opaque purposes of their wanderings, and the resultant difficulties that walking creates. Indeed, if the nineteenth-century flâneuse relies on concealment and masquerade, and the early twentieth-century flâneuse is subversive and radical, then the contemporary haptic flâneuse is one who begins to possess and, given her tactility, grasp the sites of walking.

This nuanced idea of the haptic flâneuse describes more subtly how the aesthetics of walking in Arnold's films can be read alongside contemporary theories of gender. Feminist theories of walking draw on the work of Michel de Certeau (1988) for whom walking as transformative practice is also relevant to this study. The relationship between walking and the city, for de Certeau, is one of tactile reciprocity whereby the walker re-fashions totalising perspectives of urban space for their own design. In arguing that walking is a force for change, I aim to show how de Certeau's assertion that "to walk is to lack a place" (1988: 103) resonates with the female characters in Arnold's films.

This new way of interpreting the flâneuse also occupies the intersection of gender and class, as well as race in the portrayal of Star (Sasha Lane) in *American Honey* (2016). Intersectional gender theory repositions feminism within discourses of race and class (Crenshaw, 1989). Although a detailed examination of intersectional feminism is beyond the scope of this thesis, its core concerns are nevertheless appropriate. Firstly, Arnold's representation of the flâneuse challenges previous iterations, as noted, in that her characters are from socially and economically deprived backgrounds, and the issues they face as women, as will be shown, are further problematised by their class, their race, and their age. Secondly, the films examined in this thesis are directed by a woman and document the lives of

predominantly female protagonists, and are therefore considered as feminist films in this thesis. Following Jean-Anne Sutherland and Kathryn Feltey (2017), I demonstrate how Arnold's work conforms to what they refer to as "power-to" feminist narratives. Such narratives, they argue, portray women characters "overcoming obstacles and defying social norms as they struggle to establish an independent, autonomous identity" (Sutherland and Feltey, 2017: 625). However, Sutherland and Feltey conclude that "power-to" films are dominated by white middle-class women which thus perpetuates existing inequalities of class and race by failing to give sufficient voice to women from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds. An intersectional approach that includes a discussion of class is thus particularly relevant here. Crucially, Arnold's films interrogate the lives of women from this demographic, and so make visible a marginalised section of society. To follow Sutherland and Feltey, her films enable women to achieve "agency where there was none" (2017: 619), and, as I argue, walking enables them to put power into action.

That Arnold uses walking as a form of agency is reinforced by studies of walking in working-class communities. Lisa Bostock (2001) and Emily Cuming (2013) observe how walking, in many cases, is a sign of disadvantage, with financial and geographical factors determining access to vehicular mobility, and single mothers, in particular, experience a number of challenges (Titheridge, 2014). I therefore examine the representation of single mothers in both *Wasp* and *Fish Tank* to explore how this coheres with social attitudes at the time of each film's release. Given the era of austerity, isolationism, and nationalism from which many of Arnold's films emerge, her characterisation of young, unmarried women and mothers challenges the political landscape of the time. Indeed, a number of films contemporary to Arnold

reflect this approach. *Last Resort* (Pawlikowski, 2000), *Gypo* (Dunn, 2005), *London to Brighton* (Williams, 2006), and *It's a Free World* (Loach, 2007) all deal with single women and the challenge to combine career, family, or other responsibilities. During this period, the demonising of single mothers continued to provide opportunities for political point-scoring, with the right-wing press arguing that single mothers were a symbol of social decay, whilst centre-left discourse linked unmarried pregnancy to a narrowing of future potential (Brown, 2005). Although *Wuthering Heights* (2011) depicts a different historical era to the other films in Arnold's oeuvre, these issues of class are evident in Cathy's (played by Shannon Beer and Kaya Scodelario) shift from rural poverty to landed affluence, with walking again performing a vital narrative function in symbolising this change. Furthermore, issues of class and race are significant in the representation of Heathcliff (played by James Hewson and Solomon Glave), as will be examined in chapter five.

The relationship between walking, class, and gender is addressed in *Dog*, *Wasp*, and *Fish Tank*. However, it is also demonstrated that, despite disadvantages created by economic deprivation, social inequality, and familial tensions, walking also offers opportunities for cohesion and equilibrium. In some cases, walking becomes a valued commodity rather than a marker of deprivation. For example, the empty suburbs of *American Honey* provide the magazine crew time and space to generate income, and in the chapter on *Red Road*, I argue that walking enables its protagonist Jackie (Kate Dickie) to effect a connection to the tangibility of the present, rather than the trauma of the past. Furthermore, it is important to note that lack of access to automotive transport due to age, economic circumstances, and social position, is not exclusive to women: for John (Freddie Cunliffe) in *Dog*, Billy (Harry Treadaway) in *Fish Tank*, Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, and Jake (Shia

LeBeouf) in *American Honey*, walking is just as much an indicator of class and exclusion as it is for their female counterparts.

The age of Arnold's female protagonists varies but predominantly consists of young women from adolescent teenagers to those in their late twenties and early thirties. These characters are at particularly important thresholds in their lives, and I explore how this demographic provides another dimension to Bakhtin's threshold chronotope as applied here. Indeed, these strong, independent female characters contrast with the ineffective fathers and father-figures who populate Arnold's films. Men are often conspicuous by their absence, by their inability to function as positive parents and role models, or by their display of violent or predatory behaviour. In fact, it is Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* who stands out from the other emotionally impoverished male figures: his sensual and physical connection with Cathy provides the core to that film, and I consider how Heathcliff's walking aligns him with Cathy as well as Arnold's other female characters.

Considering Arnold's films from the perspective of female agency also provides a means of examining representations of gender that are independent of psychoanalytic theory (Smyth, 2019). This thesis eschews an ocularcentric approach that theorises the female body as the object of a male gaze (Mulvey, 1993) and, instead, follows Lindner's argument that audience responses to film are influenced by their own experiences formed from "embodied affective relations with the world" (2012: 209). The analysis of *Wasp*, for example, refers to the work of Elena del Rio (2008) who argues that, rather than being a spectacle and object of a male gaze, women have "the power to de-form and trans-form the physical/aesthetic as well as the ideological dimensions of the film" (2008: 3-5). I argue, therefore, that Arnold's work appeals to spectators who share her vision of femininity not as cultural or

biological construct but as one of female embodiment, a being-in-the-world that fosters a sense of cohesion and community.

This thesis focuses predominantly on the walking experiences of able-bodied and, for the most part, white women. Instances of disabled walking are not encountered in Arnold's narratives, and whilst there is some consideration of ethnicity in the chapters on *Wuthering Heights* and *American Honey*, I acknowledge these factors both as a limitation and a stimulus for future research. I also understand, following Voelcker, that there are further opportunities to apply the chronotope of walking to other marginalised on-screen bodies: those who are not white, not heterosexual, not able-bodied or affluent, or those who are exiled (Voelcker, 2018: 14). Heathcliff is an exception to the female subjects of this study, but I also examine attitudes towards his ethnicity in the chapter on *Wuthering Heights*, and this is also relevant to the character of Star (Sasha Lane) in *American Honey*. Whilst ethnicity is not the central focus of this thesis, in the next chapter I examine scholarship that explores walking from Black, Asian, and Minority-Ethnic (BAME) perspectives.

Although this thesis focuses on walking and female empowerment rather than Arnold as auteur, there are aspects of her career, visual style, and choice of narrative that might warrant an auteurist approach. This study identifies Arnold as the dominant creative force in several ways: her films reflect her world-view; her characters are drawn from her own experiences; her depiction of urban space is influenced by her background; and her haptic visual style is common to all her films.¹

¹ Arnold's visual style is undoubtedly her own as pointed out by Ryan himself in an interview with Barry Ackroyd (2012). It is also noticeable that the tactile qualities of

In addition to her visual style remains consistent, her films, as will be shown, can be read as feminist “power-to” narratives which illustrate women’s agency without being overly didactic or moralistic. Furthermore, several themes and motifs permeate her work, in addition to the more obvious ones of walking and social class as noted above. These commonalities include her use of an edgeland aesthetic (Hanson, 2015) to depict landscape; images of wildlife, from small insects to wild bears; and even the use of cars as heterotopic spaces.

From an industry perspective, Arnold is one of the UK’s most critically acclaimed directors, first achieving industry recognition with her short film *Wasp* for which she won an Academy Award. In addition she has won two Baftas and four prizes at the Cannes Film Festival (Jones, 2016). A symposium at the British Film Institute in 2014, which screened many of her films (NECS, 2014), was followed by a special edition of the *Journal of British Cinema and Television* which published a number of essays on her work.² She has worked more recently on several American television productions which include a complete season of HBO’s *Big Little Lies* (2019). Thematically, her films are linked to British social realism, but her distinctive style has also been described as contributing to a new form of poetic social realism (Forrest 2013). By choosing Arnold’s work as the subject of a doctoral thesis, I extend the increasing scholarly and industrial appreciation of her status as a

her films precede Ryan’s involvement, as is seen in *Dog* which contains the embodied, sensory design of later films but was photographed by Sean Bobbitt.

² The January 2016 edition included essays from Jacobs (2016); Lawrence (2016a, 2016b); Murray (2016); Thornham (2016a).

filmmaker.³ Therefore, in providing a detailed and critical interpretation of Arnold's oeuvre that concentrates solely on walking, this thesis is distinguished from previous studies that focus on gender and aesthetics in individual films, or discuss her work within the context of British social realism.

However, this study does not engage in a purely auteurist study. As Alison Butler writes, "theories of authorship have languished in a state of partial renovation since the 1970s" (2002: 61), pointing to the collaborative nature of filmmaking, and this examination of Arnold's work also recognises the important contributions of others to her work. Furthermore, I do not ignore the contribution made by Arnold's regular cinematographer, Robbie Ryan. Barry Ackroyd credits Ryan for the "tactile quality" that he brings to *Wuthering Heights* (2012: n.p.), whilst Ryan himself is keen to compliment Arnold for the freedom she allows her crew (in Ackroyd, 2012). The collaborative process is further emphasised by the fact that for her first feature, *Red Road*, Arnold worked with proposals initially laid down by Lars Von Trier's Advance Party group before making the project her own, whilst *Wuthering Heights* derives from a literary source.

Recent scholarship on contemporary British cinema has focused on social realism as an aesthetic movement (Forrest, 2013), or it has identified the importance of individual male filmmakers such as Shane Meadows (Schwarz, 2013). In

³ In 2019, Arnold was commissioned by HBO to direct all eight episodes of the second series of *Big Little Lies*. There has been much controversy and speculation about Arnold's role in the final cut of the episodes. Indeed, one article, discussing her negative experience on set, suggests that the concept of the auteur is a "doomed" one, particularly when working on high-end TV productions (Leigh, 2019: n.p.)

comparison, women directors are examined as a collective unit rather than on the merits of their individual work (Cortvriend 2018; Smyth, 2019), an approach which can suggest that women filmmakers continue to be defined as a homogenous group. The lack of engagement with individual women filmmakers is recognised by what Stella Hockenhull calls a “paucity” of films within British social-realism which address explicitly the concerns of female protagonists (2014). Nevertheless, since the turn of the Millennium, there has emerged a number of British women directors who have considered marginalised voices and employed more poetic visual styles to present both character and landscape. Arnold’s films, alongside those of Carine Adler, Barnard, Joanna Hogg, Sally Potter, and Lynne Ramsay eschew the didacticism of British social realist filmmakers (Forrest, 2013), whilst her characters contradict stereotypes of working-class, and even underclass, communities. Like Arnold, Barnard’s films are studies in social deprivation: both *The Arbor* (2010) and *The Selfish Giant* (2012) explore life on social housing estates, whilst reviews of both films draw attention to the haptic and sensory qualities of Barnard’s visual style (Zoller Seitz, 2013, for example). Potter’s *Ginger and Rosa* (2012), with Robbie Ryan as cinematographer, is praised for its “beautifully textured, almost tactile close-ups of characters and the world around them” (Mayer, 2012, n.p.). The predominance of a haptic aesthetic within the work of women filmmakers lends credence therefore to Giuliana Bruno’s (2002) claim for haptic visuality as an appropriate feminist approach to reading space.

In sum, by focussing on Arnold, this thesis recognises the thematic and narrative connections between her work and that of her contemporaries, but it is the significance of walking as a defining characteristic that sets her apart from others. In using Bakhtin’s chronotope as an interpretative tool, this study identifies walking as

means of analysing the narrative and aesthetic importance of Arnold's films, and as a means of positioning them at the confluence of contemporary discourses of space, mobility, and gender.

Chapter one sets out the contextual and theoretical framework for this study, and provides an evaluation of recent scholarship on walking in the nineteenth-century novel. On the surface this comparison may appear incongruous, but there are distinct parallels between nineteenth-century representations of marginalised women and those I examine here. In both eras, the resurgence of embodied forms of mobility is a reaction to challenges presented to the physical body by emergent technologies, whether this is the newly mechanised transport of the Victorian age or the development of computer and 'virtual' technology in the twenty-first century, and so, in both periods, walking provides a means of continual resistance and transformation. These parallels contribute to an appreciation of the *flâneuse* past and present, and I consider, in particular, the work of Elkin (2016) and Mathieson (2015). This is important to an understanding of how Arnold explores the connections between walking, social class, and urban space, which, I argue, helps to reclaim the *flâneuse* from her links with the middle-class *artiste* and bourgeois observer of urban and city life. From this wider contextual framework, I consider studies of cinematic walking to illustrate Arnold's uniqueness in using walking scenes to illuminate women's experiences of everyday space before turning to evaluate critical responses to Arnold's work. As noted, these tend to approach her films from the perspectives of British social realism and her aesthetic style. There are some which consider walking, although these are erratic and focus on individual films rather than walking as a distinct chronotope across her oeuvre.

In the second half of chapter one, I describe the theoretical framework underpinning the analysis of the films, including a thorough account of Bakhtin's chronotope and its connection to the spatial theories of de Certeau and Foucault, with de Certeau's notion of the tactility of urban space providing a particularly effective link between walking and feminist film theory. I also outline Marks' theory of haptic visibility (2000) and its links to Deleuze (1992, 1994). Following this, I examine how Arnold's representation of the female body can be read alongside the work of Del Rio (2008) and Lucy Bolton (2015), and how a consideration of performance and affect theory can challenge ocularcentric approaches exemplified in the work of Laura Mulvey (1993).

Subsequent chapters analyse the films in chronological order, emphasising the increasingly vital role that walking journeys play in Arnold's work. Chapter two addresses the short film *Milk* (1998) alongside her other shorts, *Dog*, and *Wasp*. This chapter introduces key themes and concepts that are extended and developed in later chapters. In the analysis of *Milk*, I examine how the structural position of the walking scene in the film triggers transformations in both character and narrative. Although Arnold's visual style in this film is less kinetic than her later work, the narrative emphasis on characters' mobility, whether mechanical or physical, and the aesthetic appeal to the senses, through sound in particular, help to absorb the spectator into the diegetic world. In *Dog* and *Wasp*, I address the emergence of Arnold's edgeland aesthetic. This provides ample opportunity to consider the ways in which Arnold invites audiences to inhabit the landscape and share in the world of her characters. Furthermore, I examine how Jon Hegglund's notion of ambient narratives (2013) contributes to the analysis of the films' visual and aural impact. In the analysis of *Wasp*, social context is particularly useful in explaining how Arnold uses the

transformative power of walking to address Millennial debates around gender and family.

Chapter three furthers the argument of walking's structural importance in *Red Road*. As with *Milk*, I examine the transformative power of walking through its function as a threshold chronotope. In *Red Road*, borders, whether geographical, emotional, or symbolic, dominate both narrative and *mise-en-scène*. By navigating CCTV space as well as walking through the streets of Glasgow, the film's protagonist, Jackie, shifts between virtual and physical flânerie, and by crossing this threshold she is able to resolve her emotional trauma. Particularly helpful to the approach here will be Foucault's concept of heterotopia (1986) through which the liminality of the films' digital and geographical sites can be explored.

Walking as a means of escape for Mia (Katie Jarvis) in *Fish Tank* is the subject of chapter four. The structural significance of walking is dominated by journeys between edgeland and urban sites that document Mia's emotional transformation. In addition, Arnold's use of an edgeland aesthetic as a means of transforming geographical space is further explored in this chapter. As in the analysis of *Dog and Wasp* in chapter two, Heggland's work on ambient narratives (2013) contributes to the impact of the edgeland aesthetic. In addition, Arnold's use of lingering images provides a canvas for painterly portrayals of the landscape, contributing to a sense of spectatorial absorption that helps transform audience perceptions of these sites.

Chapter five's analysis of *Wuthering Heights* extends the argument of walking's power to transform landscape and character. In addition, this chapter also reinforces walking's structural significance by analysing in detail how it signals important spatial and temporal shifts. Arnold's presentation of the Yorkshire moors

as a heterotopic site of play, pain, and pleasure enables the characters of Cathy and Heathcliff to escape the constraints of religion, family, race, and class. The chronotopicity of walking and its significance to historical contexts is furthered by the relationship between Arnold's film and Emily Brontë's novel, and I discuss how Arnold's walking scenes revisit the intimate relationship between bodies and the landscape evident in the source text.

The importance of heterotopic space to the walking chronotope is also crucial to the analysis of *American Honey* in chapter six. At first, the film's focus on automobility challenges the integrity of the walking chronotope in this thesis. However, although it is a film about being on the road, *American Honey* also demonstrates some of the conventions of what Nadia Lie (2017) calls the counter-road movie. Thus, rather than automobility defining character, it is walking that does so. By analysing the structural importance of walking scenes, and how they contribute once more to the transformation of Star's character, I argue in this chapter that walking signifies the apotheosis of individuality in a country which is noted, arguably, for its reliance on the car.

The final chapter revisits the questions that initiated this research and seeks to demonstrate how they have been resolved by the textual analysis and how the chronotope contributes to an understanding of Arnold's use of walking in her films. It also addresses future implications for the application of walking as a chronotope in other film and literary texts. As with any research, this study has opened up even more pathways, and I discuss possibilities for further work in this area.

To sum up, the chapters that follow examine how the walking chronotope weaves an interpretative design through each of the films. Therefore, the chronotope as used in this thesis provides an important link between an aesthetic approach to

film predicated on “subjective expression” as Kate Ince writes (2013: 607), and the spatial and temporal contexts within which walking takes place. And so, through the figure of the haptic flâneuse, a comprehensive understanding of the active relationship between women and the landscape is enabled.

Chapter One: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Considerable scholarly attention has been paid to the work of Andrea Arnold in the field of Film Studies and this can be categorised in three strands. Firstly, her films are discussed as a new form of British social realism. As noted, Forrest (2013) firmly situates her work within this field but with the proviso that it also contains a sense of poetic realism through its use of landscape. Secondly, the relationship of Arnold's female characters to this landscape is the subject of numerous feminist readings of her films (for example Thornham, 2019) that also consider issues of class and identity. Thirdly, many studies focus on Arnold's use of an embodied aesthetic, summarised by Jonathan Murray who comments on "the remarkable emphasis on visual apprehension, [and] sensation ... that characterises [Arnold's] cinema as a whole" (2016: 206).

Unlike the above studies, this thesis explores Arnold's work in a different way, suggesting that new meanings can be found in her films by analysing the representation of walking through the framework of Bakhtin's chronotope. Furthermore, it differs from previous readings of Arnold's work by introducing the notion of the haptic flâneuse to describe the ways in which her characters engage with the urban landscape. In the first part of this chapter, then, the concept of the flâneuse is examined, and a connection is made between nineteenth-century studies of walking in literature and the flâneuse's contemporary iteration in film. The debate about the flâneuse as an alternative to the leisured metropolitanism of her privileged counterpart is addressed and positioned within Elkin's more recent study of the flâneuse (2016). De Certeau's concept of spatial practice, which informs much recent scholarship on walking, is then considered. Following this, by evaluating

extant work on the cinematic flâneuse, the figure of the haptic flâneuse is proposed to describe Arnold's characters, thus offering a new interpretation of her work.

The Flâneuse in Nineteenth-Century Fiction

Despite the dominance of the flâneur as a cultural figure, the flâneuse can also be traced back to nineteenth-century fiction, and this section begins with addressing recent studies of walking in literature of the period, alongside Mathieson (2015) and Trish Bredar (2017). These writers complement the concerns in this study, and, whilst this is an analysis of film, their notion of walking as a means of social cohesion, as well as a way for marginalised characters to discover agency where there was previously none, chimes with some of the central themes in this thesis.

It is notable that a focus on walking from the perspective of working-class characters has only recently emerged, and Mathieson's study in particular considers poorer characters from the novels of Charles Dickens, Charlotte Brontë, and George Eliot, to illuminate the importance of walking as a narrative function as well as how it raises questions about community and nation (Mathieson, 2015: 17). Prior to this, studies of literary walking focused on its purpose as a means of artistic inspiration, as noted by Anne Wallace (1993) who, in her study of the "peripatetic mode" in literature, argues that it is the effects of walking, such as its source of creative expression, that are highlighted by scholars, rather than walking as a process in itself.

Mathieson identifies walking as a defining characteristic of nineteenth-century literature, and writes how, for Victorian novelists, mobility, and in particular walking, crystallises that era's concerns with the mutability of place, its position within the wider global landscape, and the emergence of new transport technologies (2015: 2).

Whilst she does not explicitly reference Bakhtin's chronotope, Mathieson's study is concerned with the time-space of walking. Indeed, for her, nineteenth-century discourses of mobility are stimulated by the impact of evolving networks and transport systems upon the lived body, manifested in the physical effects of moving through space at faster speeds, the introduction of mechanical forms of transport, and the effects of road and rail construction. The body is therefore implicated within a discourse of timetables, shift patterns, sporting events, and leisure time which combine to create "an image of Britain bound together in a strong, unified web of black lines stretching across the country" (Mathieson, 2015: 7). As a resistance to these networks of structure and control, Mathieson argues that walking reinforces the sensory connections between the female body and the landscape, creating a narrative space that exposes a gendered and classed politics of mobility. Consequently, although walking for some is a choice, for others it comes "to represent the condition of being 'off the network', beyond the communal and spatial structures of the modern nation-place" (2015: 23).

Whilst Mathieson attends to working-class characters, Bredar (2017) focuses solely on Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847). Here, Bredar argues that walking provides the novel's eponymous protagonist with "a heightened consciousness of her position in space and [enhances] her status as a discrete, rigidly bound subject" (2017: 118). Like Mathieson, walking scenes are narratively significant and help to shape the trajectory of character and narrative. However, Bredar admits that Charlotte Brontë's protagonist does not "dismantle hegemonic social norms" (2017: 119), and so walking functions more as an aesthetic and psychological element rather than a means to challenge contemporary spatial practice. However, for both Mathieson and Bredar, walking provides opportunities for women's self-expression

and agency within restrictive patriarchal norms, and also creates space for social cohesion.

These studies of nineteenth-century fiction have implications here, but with notable differences, apart from the obvious one of literary versus cinematic form. Mathieson considers walking as part of a wider discourse of mobility, not as a modality in itself. In addition, despite her acknowledgement that these mobilities are important from a structural, thematic, and representational perspective, she does not consider walking as a chronotope. Furthermore, whilst Mathieson and Bredar examine characters and settings that bear some similarity in their economic and social deprivation to some of those who appear in this study, I argue that Arnold's sustained focus on working-class and under-class characters in narratives that are recognisable to audiences in their depictions of everyday life, imbues her work with greater potential to effect change in audience perspectives.

Whilst Mathieson and Bredar examine works of literature, Julianne Pidduck's study of 1990s costume drama identifies walking as an act of physical, social, and psychological release from social convention (1998: 383). Pidduck's work is relevant to this study in that she imbricates walking with the motif of windows, arguing that the latter is an example of Bakhtin's threshold chronotope. I return to Pidduck later in this chapter when discussing Bakhtin, but her study again highlights scholarly emphasis on walking from the perspective of privileged characters, which contrasts strongly with Arnold's working-class heroines. Nevertheless, Pidduck is an example of scholarship that begins to turn to topographical analysis of film from the 1990s on, part of the context for my study.

Just as women in the Victorian novel reflect the concerns of nineteenth-century mobility, so Arnold's narratives reflect the contemporary economics of

female walking and the continuing restrictions placed on their mobility by their geographical and social positions. Arnold's characters walk in settings such as housing estates, wastelands, inner city areas, and edgeland spaces, invoking notions of marginalisation and deprivation. Indeed, for women who inhabit these spaces, both cinematically and in reality, walking is not a luxury. For example, Cuming, in her study of contemporary coming-of-age narratives in film and literature, writes that women who live in areas of economic deprivation are "ill-served by adequate public transport" (2013: 330); likewise, from a sociological perspective, Bostock considers the sense of social exclusion felt by women who have to walk through areas of neglect and social depression and which continue to act as "a daily reminder ... of their disadvantaged position" (Bostock, 2001: 17).

As I argue, this focus on walking within areas of social deprivation forms a central part of the chronotope, relocating the *flâneuse* to the everyday spaces of the urban environment. In this way, I follow Mathieson who argues that, whilst commonplace instances of walking in ordinary everyday spaces might be overlooked, they also "provide a more nuanced understanding of the multiple socio-cultural meanings of walking" (2015: 21). This is important to this study in that Arnold's characters have little choice but to walk, for theirs is not the idle wandering of the *flâneuse*. In the next section, therefore, I trace the shifting characteristics of this figure and argue that Arnold's contemporary iteration is more than a mere counterpart of the historical *flâneur* but an autonomous figure of resistance in her own right.

The Flâneur and the Flâneuse

The nineteenth-century flâneur, according to Rebecca Solnit, strolls amongst the metropolis and is part of the crowd for which the city as a geo-political space is a focal point for shared cultural and commercial experiences (2014: 198-199).

Popularised in the literature of Charles Baudelaire and Edgar Allan Poe, the flâneur is an urban stroller, a loafer, an idler even. He can be likened to the dandy and the Bohemian: an effete bourgeois savouring the sights of the modern world and capturing all beneath his male gaze. He is both public and anonymous, singular and unremarkable: he is, as Poe calls him, “the man of the crowd” (2010: 442), as well as a man *in* the crowd.

In his rereading of Baudelaire and Poe, Walter Benjamin (2006) identifies the flâneur as part of a discourse of nineteenth-century capitalism. Emerging from the streets of nineteenth-century Paris, the flâneur epitomises the male bourgeois for whom the crowd becomes an object of study: he is, therefore, a symbol of patriarchal economies of power and privilege which permit his scopic authority (Parkhurst Ferguson, 1994). From this perspective, the flâneur is aligned with surveillance, purposelessness, and solitude, characteristics that are in contrast to women whose position is less advantageous. Indeed, a woman walking alone in the city provokes very different responses: rather than a flâneur, she is a street-walker, a term loaded with connotations of prostitution and transgressive sexuality (Wilson, 1992). Therefore, because of these sexual divisions, and women’s position as the object of the flâneur’s gaze, Janet Wolff claims that there can be no such thing as a flâneuse (1985, 2006).

However, this study joins those which have begun to re-envision the flâneuse and draws implicitly on Benjamin’s concept of the flâneur as an alienated individual,

an instability that Wilson too sees as “not the triumph of masculine power but its attenuation” (1992: 109). This strain of criticism surfaces most clearly with Amy Murphy, who sees the flâneuse as a “potent [model] for resistance in our collective consciousness” (2006: 41). More recently, Elkin argues for a redefining of the concept of the flâneur (2016: 11), and, by extension, the flâneuse. Therefore, following these interpretations, this thesis considers the flâneuse as a figure of resistance to social norms, and one who combines the optic gaze of the flâneur with investigative and tactile investigations of the contemporary urban environment.

Both Elkin (2016) and Giampaolo Nuvolati (2014) celebrate the investigative nature of the contemporary flâneuse. For Elkin, the flâneuse “gets to know the city by wandering its streets, investigating its dark corners, peering behind facades, penetrating into secret courtyards” (2016: 22). Likewise, Nuvolati offers three types of flâneur/flâneuse (Nuvolati combines the two, but hereon I will refer to his as flâneuse), all of which are appropriate to Arnold’s protagonists: the “explorative-mobile”, the “observative-static”, and the “shadowing-mobile” (2014: 30), and each is connected through the notion of investigation: the explorative-mobile flâneuse is a collector of cultural artefacts and thus recalls the Parisian rag-picker who is examined below and in the chapters on *American Honey* and *Wuthering Heights*; the observative-static flâneuse describes the watchfulness of Jackie in *Red Road*, but it also pertains to other protagonists who gaze out on to the landscape through numerous windows, doors, and other screens throughout the films; finally, the investigative nature of all Arnold’s women characters fulfils the function of Nuvolati’s shadowing-mobile type. However, despite his attention to the flâneuse’s inquisitive and exploratory characteristics, Nuvolati’s study does not go further into the tactile,

and thus haptic, negotiations of space considered in this thesis, nor does he apply them to cinematic representations of the flâneuse.

Whilst earlier studies of the flâneuse restrict their scope to the bourgeois artistes who have time to walk (Solnit, 2014), more recent work acknowledges the modern flâneuse who, like Arnold's characters, is bound up with the responsibilities of motherhood and the pressures of urban life. Elkin, for example, describes the modern flâneuse as one who is able to operate on all levels of the social spectrum (2016: 22). Likewise, Nuvolati argues that this contemporary iteration is "less elitist" than her predecessors and needs to be refined to suit contemporary urban practice (2014: 26). In a similar vein, Frederik Le Roy (2017) identifies in Baudelaire's rag-picker or *chiffonier* a figure who is certainly not elitist. This impoverished, investigative body gathers the city's discarded objects like an urban refuse collector and, for Le Roy, the rag-picker and the flâneur occupy opposite points on the streetwalking continuum (2017): whilst the flâneur wanders for leisure, the rag-picker walks for work (Le Roy: 2017). Indeed, the tactile investigations of the marginalised rag-picker align it more, as Deborah Parsons argues, with female experiences of urban walking (2000: 10), an observation which connects explicitly the rag-picker to the haptic flâneuse. This de-classing of the flâneuse thus provides an important link to my interpretation of Arnold's walking women for there exists in this concept of the haptic flâneuse, a joyous and classless desire to experience urban space and wrest it away from patriarchal authority and its scopic mapping of the city.

The haptic flâneuse invokes an important set of associations between corporeality and experience that are present in feminist studies of walking. Aritha van Herk, for example, suggests that a woman who walks in the city "must enter its intestines, its exchanges and energies, rhythms and routines" (2007: 23). Likewise,

Helen Scalway uses the term “counter-flâneuse” to describe the “chaotic and fragmentary” relationship between women and the city which entails the “visual caress of fragments” (2006: 169), thus forming an embodied connection to the landscape in which space becomes text. In the same way that these authors focus on the somatic, the argument here also rests on a tactile engagement between female characters and the landscape in Arnold’s films. However, their observations reflect real world or literary figures and are unrelated to cinema or specific directors. Nor do they implicate the chronotopic, and thus textual, significance of walking as I do in this thesis.

Characters are important to the chronotopicity of a text (Tang, 2018: 6), and the flâneuse is a crucial figure in Arnold’s films, although one quite distinct from that identified in previous studies. As noted in the introduction, Arnold’s flâneuse speaks for marginalised women whose experience of the world is removed from their more privileged antecedents. But this flâneuse is more than “a redefined flâneuse” (Thornham, 2019: 76). Instead, this study of the walking chronotope demonstrates how the haptic flâneuse binds together the time-space of the text in two ways: firstly, she functions as an externalisation of the landscape, reflecting its tensions and its contradictions; and, secondly, the haptic flâneuse enables a reading of everyday space which reflects contemporary discourses of walking and women’s experiences of the contemporary urban landscape.

Importantly, whilst there are gender inequalities extant in the oppositions of flâneur/flâneuse, the emphasis here is on the ways that the flâneuse inhabits the spaces within and beyond the scope of her gaze. The inquiring look of Arnold’s characters out on to the landscape is more than wishful: it stimulates the act of walking and, by extension, the re-appropriation of sites hitherto closed to them. In

the next section, I locate this movement from optic to haptic visuality within the context of Michel de Certeau's theory of space.

Walking and de Certeau

There are a number of elements within de Certeau's work that contribute to an understanding of the haptic flâneuse in this study. Firstly, his notion of a "rhetoric of walking" (1988: 100) provides a useful linguistic metaphor to help describe the significance of the walking chronotope, as used here, in the construction of narrative; secondly, he bestows a degree of agency on walkers in his analogy of the streets as a text upon which pedestrians write their own meaning; thirdly, de Certeau's model of an ocular continuum that moves between optic and haptic visuality resonates with Marks' own schema (2000), detailed below, and also helps to describe the ways that Arnold's characters transform their situations through the shifts between these two modes of looking; fourthly, and connected to the previous point, de Certeau's association of walking with tactility is demonstrated in Arnold's visual aesthetic; and, finally, his observation that "to walk is to lack a place" (1988: 103) is appropriate to describe the constant mobility of Arnold's protagonists, not only in geographical and psychological terms, but also in the ways that their movements are captured by the dynamics of her cinematography.

De Certeau maps out his theory of walking in his essay *Walking in the City* (1988), although a fuller comprehension of his ideas can be traced to his distinction between space and place. The city, for de Certeau, is a concept that exists apart from urban life itself, an empty signifier requiring the actions of people to give it meaning. Space is therefore "a practiced place" (1988: 117), meaning that place is an abstraction that becomes space only when it is acted upon by subjects, or "mobile

elements” (1988: 117). Thus, whilst urban planning, with its pedestrian routes, roads, and crossing points is seen to dictate physical movement, it is possible for de Certeau’s pedestrians to appropriate these spaces as their own. In this way, walking becomes “a space of enunciation” (de Certeau, 1988: 98-99) in which walkers create, and also re-create, the urban map for themselves.

Just as the text of a book is brought to life and transformed through reading, so walking is itself a form of production, and de Certeau’s use of a textual analogy to describe walking is continued in his notion of the “rhetoric of walking”, where walking “is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statements uttered” (de Certeau, 1988: 97). The city thus becomes a text that pedestrians write and re-write for themselves, with walking providing the syntactic glue that binds together the disparate places on the urban map. Within this rhetorical analogy, De Certeau’s association of walking with “the ellipsis of conjunctive *loci*” (1988: 101, italics in the original) bestows upon it, in his narrative/textual analogy, an importance beyond its syndetic function. Indeed, just as Emre Çağlayan writes that walking in film should not be considered merely as “a transition between two different points” (2020: n.p.), so de Certeau elevates the significance of walking beyond a means to an end. More than a connecting trope, walking, for de Certeau, “is itself an effect of successive encounters and occasions that constantly alter it and make it the other’s blazon” (1988: 101). This has particular relevance to the walking chronotope identified in this study: just as walking has narrative and aesthetic significance in Arnold’s films, it also, as conceptualised by de Certeau, functions as a means of organising geographical space, carrying, via pedestrians, social and textual meaning from one location to the next.

By encouraging a reading of city space from the perspective of the pedestrian, de Certeau emphasises walking as a creative force, declaring that stories begin at “ground level, with footsteps” (1988: 97). This sense of agency has obvious relevance to this study in that I argue throughout for the transformative power of Arnold’s characters. Their journeys through geographical space/place can be likened to enunciative acts that alter audience perceptions of these locations. Indeed, de Certeau’s assertion that “to walk is to lack a place” (1988: 103) is extremely apposite to this study. Arnold’s characters live in the margins, in areas of deprivation, and sometimes outside normative social structures. Their perpetual movement signifies their search for identity and for acceptance, and their resistance derives from their willingness to walk in spaces from which they are often excluded or prohibited.

De Certeau’s theory can also be used to navigate the connections between walking and haptic visuality. His notion of ‘texturology’, literally the study of textures, rejects “the exaltation of a scopic and gnostic drive” that prioritises a totalising perspective of the city and instead celebrates its “thicks and thins” (1988: 93). In this way, de Certeau weaves together a haptic experience of space with walking, thereby connecting two important elements explored in this study: firstly, that of walking as a sensory relationship with landscape, and, secondly, the transformation of *flânerie* from its associations with a controlling optic gaze to a haptic look that prioritises the other senses. The eye that observes the city from above replicates the abstraction of the map, with the observer as the possessor of an optic, totalising gaze who stands aloof whilst the “ordinary practitioners” of the city negotiate its streets. In order to read the city with precision, de Certeau requires the onlooker to “fall back into the dark space where crowds move back and forth” (1988: 92), and in this movement from panoramic totalising perspectives towards a granular immersion into the

vibrancy of the streets, he invokes a visual continuum which compares to the “dialectical movement from far to near” of optic and haptic visuality described by Marks (2000: 163). Thus, for Marks, as with de Certeau, optic visuality is one of power and control whilst haptic visuality is characterised by closeness and a “compassionate involvement” with the world (Marks, 2000: 141), evoking an experiential contact with space and place for both spectator and the filmic subject.

De Certeau’s theory of walking imbricates several of the concerns of this thesis and helps to articulate the significance of the haptic flâneuse as an agent of change whose tool is the language of the corporeal. As Natalie Collie argues, walking helps women to “re-write the city in ... ways ... that resist, from within, the disciplines of gendered space and identity” (2013: 7), a statement which resonates with the transformative power of the characters analysed in this study.

Despite the influence of de Certeau on psychogeography (Coverley, 2010), this thesis does not engage with this branch of walking theory, despite its stated aim as “an act of subversion [which seeks] to overcome the processes of ‘banalisation’ by which the everyday experience of our surroundings becomes one of drab monotony” (Coverley, 2010: 12-13). Psychogeography synthesises walking, urban space, and psychology, but whilst its fundamental concern with reclaiming walking as an everyday act is evident in the analysis of walking scenes that follows, it is also described as a male-dominated discipline (Heddon and Turner, 2012) oriented towards a more romanticised notion of walking that Doreen Massey argues is merely another “eroticised colonisation of the city” (2005: 47). So whilst this study of walking in Arnold’s films acknowledges the agency and motives of psychogeography, it also examines the transformative power of walking from the perspective of women for whom walking is, for the most part, neither playful nor leisurely.

Female Subjectivity and Cinematic Walking

Whilst studies of cinematic walking are frequent, these often centre on individual films and there has been, to date, no sustained or rigorous account of walking in the work of one director. In this section, I examine some of these studies to position Arnold's work within a trajectory of the cinematic *flâneuse* which extends from the films of European directors such as Michelangelo Antonioni and Agnès Varda to British directors such as Alan Clarke. Following this, I explore scholarship on walking in Arnold's films. Although these provide a useful background to my thesis, they are limited to single films and so do not trace the chronotopicity of walking throughout her oeuvre. I will begin, however, by discussing the notion of female subjectivity and, in particular, debates about the male gaze. Whilst this appears to be a deviation, it is important in establishing the connection between the female body as *flâneuse* and as cinematic image.

As noted above, the *flâneuse* occupies a complex space within a network of power and the male gaze. In film theory, an erotics of desire accompanies the sight of a woman walking, and this is compounded by her historical position as an object of cinematic, and thus visual, pleasure (Natali, 2015: 3). This perspective is influenced by Mulvey (1993) for whom film's internal and external signification is predicated on a controlling, patriarchal gaze that bestows visual pleasure upon its bearer (positioned as male by Mulvey) and thus produces the female body as an object "to-be-looked-at" (1993: 116). Objectified through erotic fragmentation, women become icons "displayed for the gaze and enjoyment of men [who] are the active controllers of the look" (Mulvey, 1993: 119). Consequently, a woman's screen body, in Mulvey's view, is passive, arresting the narrative and functioning merely as spectacle.

However, Mulvey's theory is problematic in that it relies on what Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagenar refer to as "ocularcentric paradigms" (2015: 120). Such models of cinematic spectatorship prioritise an optic look that bestows power upon the observer and thus deny agency to women and so, as Martin Flanagan states, Mulvey's model negates the "possibility of individual choice or ideological resistance on the part of the spectator" (2009: 36). In a similar vein, del Rio suggests that Mulvey denies the female performer's ability to "write [her] own meanings" (2008: 5), arguing instead for theories of female subjectivity that counteract this passive mode of spectatorship and reinstate the female body as "an affective-performative force" (del Rio, 2008: 6). Through a Deleuzian reading, del Rio sees the performing body "as an assemblage of forces or affects that enter into composition with a multiplicity of other forces or affects" (2008: 3-5). In this way, the female (performing) body is a locus of subjective expression. By emphasising walking as a transformative process, I therefore follow Lindner's assertion that film opens up "affective situations that are constituted both through characters and narrative but also through various (cinematic) movements, gestures, textures, or rhythms" (2012: 209). The haptic flâneuse thus embodies these affective situations both narratively, through her function as an agent of change, and aesthetically, in the ways that Arnold presents her on-screen body not as an object of spectacle, but as a subject whose embodied movements create a shared cinematic experience.

Bolton offers another way of re-envisioning the on-screen female body. Drawing on Luce Irigaray's model of the speculum as an alternative to the Lacanian

mirror,⁴ Bolton posits the concept of “female interiority” as a means of expressing female consciousness on screen (2015: 35). The speculum’s curved construction opposes the flatness of the conventional mirror and encourages an alternative ocular perspective. Acknowledging the medical, and therefore problematic, associations of the speculum with other forms of objectification and discourses from which women have been excluded, Bolton instead emphasises the speculum’s symbolic significance. The curved mirror effectively creates a change of perspective, “to see what is specific to a woman, and to reveal how a woman can construct a world of her own” (2015: 36), and by drawing parallels to this with a study of women in film, Bolton explores how “the filmmaker’s camera ... can be conceived of as a means of ‘getting inside’ the subjectivities of women and examining interiority and consciousness” (2015: 37). Bolton’s notion of a female consciousness permits an approach to film aesthetics that is in part predicated on the concept of haptic

⁴This study draws on Adrian Johnston for an explanation of Jacques Lacan’s mirror stage which Lacan describes as the period of a child’s cognitive development beginning with their ability to “identify their own images in reflective surfaces” (Johnston, 2018: n.p.) The child’s entry into the symbolic world of language is predicated on their identification of themselves as a unified subject. This self-realisation is accelerated by other human beings, with whom the child shares the reflection, and who reinforces the child’s identity and psychological awareness of themselves as ‘self’. This entry into the symbolic world is thus shaped by the image of the self as articulated by an ‘other’. The mirror in this sense need not be a literal object, but any verbal, gestural, or behavioural means by which the subject’s consciousness is reflected back to them.

visuality, as outlined above. Whilst a recognition of a female consciousness might imply that its application is limited to the study of female characters only, Bolton argues that it has important “implications for the representation of male characters and of relationships between men and women” (2015: 35). This is particularly important in the discussion of *Wuthering Heights* in chapter five, in which it is argued that Heathcliff’s walking, through his haptic engagement with the landscape of the moors, connects him to this framework of female mobility.

Psychoanalytic theory thus highlights the complexities surrounding the perception of women on screen. However, notwithstanding my references to objectification in subsequent chapters, I follow Lindner in seeing psychoanalysis as limiting in that it “replicate[s] dominant symbolic structures and power hierarchies” (2012: 202). Instead, as noted in the introduction, Sutherland and Feltey’s work on agency (2017) enables connections to be made between an intersectional approach incorporating gender, class, and race. The figure of the haptic flâneuse thus offers an approach to walking in film which emphasises the physicality of space rather than its interiority. In this way, the urban landscape becomes more than a reflection of character psychology but also demonstrates how, as Ince argues, femininity is formed through an emphasis on “female subjectivity and embodiment” (2013: 610).

Cinematic Flânerie

Studies of the flâneuse in film have been, up until recently, limited to the work of European directors, in particular the work of Giuliana Bruno who emphasises the embodied connection between cinema, women, and walking, likening women’s early experiences of watching film as a form of flânerie that liberates them from domestic space and enables them to reverse the cinematic gaze. The static flâneuse, whom

Bruno refers to as the “spectatrix” is able to “enter the world of the flâneur and derive its pleasures through filmic motions [which provides] access to the erotics of darkness and (urban) wandering denied to the female subject. (Bruno, 1993: 51). This figure of the spectatrix is particularly relevant in the analysis of *Red Road* and *American Honey*, where screens act as substitutes for physical flânerie. Likewise, Bruno’s focus on film’s haptic qualities is of particular relevance to this study. She equates the wanderings of Antonioni’s flâneuses as “haptic journeys”, with his camera, like that of Arnold’s, negotiating the city in ways that “*feel* the space” (2002: 97-98, italics in the original).⁵ Although she does not use the term ‘haptic flâneuse’, Bruno’s work reinforces the notion of the flâneuse as a haptic wanderer. However, she too ignores issues of class and race, engaging primarily with the middle-class characters and the metropolitan settings of European cinema.

Studies of Agnès Varda’s films consider other interpretations of the flâneuse. Varda depicts walking in a range of contexts, from the solipsistic wanderings of a beautiful chanteuse in *Cléo de 5 à 7* (1962), to the doomed nomadism of *Vagabond* (1985), whilst an iteration of the rag-picker, the glaneuse, appears in Varda’s 2000 film *Les glaneurs et les glaneuses* which documents the lives of those who glean (or rummage) for food. Here, their physical contact with the earth is filmed by Varda with a hand-held digital camera which, as Les Roberts suggests, further intensifies the haptic qualities of both the glaneuse’s material conditions and its cinematic representation (2005: 201). The phenomenology of Varda’s films emerges, writes

⁵ Bruno also references Chantal Akerman’s films as illustrating journeys which “touch the space of everyday life” and capturing motion which “allows a woman to be in her own space” (2002: 102).

Ince, through the sense of being “powerfully rooted in a particular place” (2013: 610). Indeed, Arnold has revealed her admiration for Varda’s work (in Taylor, 2012: n.p), and like Arnold’s relationship to the urban locations of south-east England, Varda’s cinematic locations are also places where she has lived, and so her films are connected to actual experience (Ince, 2013: 610).

Other studies of the cinematic flâneuse comment on the impact of female agency.⁶ Laura di Bianco writes about transgression in the films of Marina Spada where women appropriate urban space in opposition to the figure of the male flâneur. Female pedestrians in Spada’s films, like those of Arnold’s, are agents of change, and are shown perpetually crossing and observing the city from above (di Bianco, 2013: 122). Likewise, Voelcker discusses *Wanda* (Loden, 1970), *News from Home* (Akerman, 1976), *Vagabond* (Varda, 1985), and *Blessed* (Toshiko, 2001), and argues that films about female pedestrians present women as agents of change who “wander in defiance of social convention” (2018: 14). However, whilst these studies make connections between women, agency, and even haptic visuality, none makes the explicit connection between walking and Bakhtin’s notion of the chronotope, whilst also limiting their scope to individual films.

Specifically, this study argues that walking operates significantly on a

⁶ For Amy Murphy, the flâneuse “def[ies] the very structures that define both the city and ourselves” (2006: 41). Similarly, in her analysis of *Lost in Translation*, Lucy Bolton argues that its protagonist Charlotte (Scarlett Johansson) “is situated in a complex landscape of space and symbolism ... her wanderings are apparently aimless, but they have an investigative aspect to them that prevents them from being random” (2015: 111).

narrative level and engages with walking as a discrete element of analysis, taking a holistic approach that is missing from previous studies of both Arnold's films in particular and cinematic walking in general. By analysing the chronotopicity of walking, I therefore demonstrate its narrative, aesthetic, and contextual importance: it is an end in itself, something that, as Çağlayan observes, is missing from Film Studies:

Walking as an act has rarely been attributed any aesthetic significance in mainstream cinema. Its conventional treatment has more often than not been a function of transition between two events and much less an event in itself. Most sequences draw less attention to the means of walking than to its end: the action is both squeezed in order to keep the narrative momentum forward. (2020: n.p.)

This observation that walking scenes are transitional provides a useful point of comparison to de Certeau's analogy of walking as linguistic construct, as noted above. However, although Çağlayan's engagement with walking is relevant to this study, I address a number of concerns arising from his essay: firstly, he does not engage with mainstream cinema, but instead with films that he collects under the umbrella of what is termed "slow cinema" (see below); and, secondly, he does not acknowledge the role of the flâneuse: indeed, although recognising Baudelaire's flâneur, he refers to the protagonist in Varda's *Vagabond* (*Sans toit ni loi*, 1985) only as a "feminist wanderer" (2020: n.p.).

In prioritising the walking scenes in alternative forms of cinema, Çağlayan follows a similar trajectory to Bruno. Furthermore, he implies that mainstream film directors rely on what he calls "walk and talk" sequences (Çağlayan, 2020: n.p.). This is problematic in that it suggests that any analysis of walking is permissible only in arthouse films, thus creating a cultural and creative hierarchy, or in extended walking scenes. A case in point is Martin Flanagan's association of a "cinema of walking" with the "slow cinema" to which Çağlayan refers. "Slow cinema" is cinema

with “minimal narrative structure” (Flanagan, 2008: n.p.), and is characterised by excessively long takes and fixed camera positions that encourage spectators to linger on objects within the frame in much the same way as Lefebvre demonstrates in his work on “intentional landscapes” (2006). A characteristic of slow cinema, according to Flanagan, is the “cinema of walking” (2008: n.p.). Here, walking does not require a narrative imperative: instead, it “signifies a rupture in the organisation of drama” (2008: n.p.) and privileges duration and distended time (Flanagan, 2012: 531).

In contrast to Bruno, Çağlayan, and Flanagan, this thesis provides an analysis of walking that cuts across low- and high-cultural cinematic forms. Arnold’s films are relatively conventional in that they follow traditional narrative structures and are inhabited by recognisable characters, but they also exhibit some aesthetic characteristics of alternative cinema. For example, although she deploys long-shots and cutaways to encourage contemplation of the landscape, Arnold’s use of hand-held camera also evokes a feeling of energy and movement. In addition, rather than merely rupturing or slowing down the narrative, walking scenes, as will be shown, are integral to the narrative, an end in themselves, as well as a means by which Arnold can create space for audiences to reassess their perceptions of the built environment.

Maud Ceuterick’s (2020) study of Shirin Neshat’s 2009 film, *Women without Men*, also examines film outside the mainstream, although, in its consideration of walking as a narrative function, it provides a useful reference point for this thesis. Ceuterick identifies the importance of walking in promoting what she refers to as an “affirmative aesthetics” to describe the transformative effects of walking scenes both narratively and cinematically. Ceuterick, as I do in this study, sees walking in

Neshat's film functioning as a means of social cohesion and unity, as well as a method of disrupting patriarchal space (2002: 98). Agency is achieved, according to Ceuterick, through the process of women 'haunting' public spaces denied to them by patriarchal authority and religious proscription. This 'haunting' is made possible within the cinematic world by women's invisibility, or masquerade, which provides them with opportunities for a "micro-resistance to the gendering of space" (2020: 111).

This notion of 'haunting' resonates with the characters in Arnold's films: in *Red Road*, for example, Jackie haunts both virtual and real spaces of the eponymous estate; non-chronological editing in *Wuthering Heights* creates an impression of reverie, with both Cathy and Heathcliff 'haunted' by the memory of each other; and in *Fish Tank*, when Mia returns to the travellers' camp to caress the horse, Arnold's visual style creates a dream-like sensation. However, whilst Ceuterick's study of *Women without Men* is based on a close textual analysis, her interpretations of walking scenes focus only briefly on the process itself. She refers to walking journeys in a more descriptive style: "the light sound of her steps ... walking decidedly unveiled ... fast steps now wilfully break the silence, creating a sustained rhythm" (Ceuterick, 2020: 108-110). Rather than interrogating its sensory qualities, these examples tend to foreground the function of walking within the narrative or its specific relation to the landscape. Furthermore, despite her reference to the notion of "space-time" (2002: 98), Ceuterick's essay does not extend to considering walking as a chronotope which would integrate the concept of haunting within its aesthetic as well as its narrative properties.

Walking in Arnold's films

Arnold scholarship has grown in step with her output, but the majority of studies, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, consider her position within the genre of British social realism, her visual style, and her representation of women within the contemporary landscape. Walking, however, plays a subsidiary, and erratic role, in this body of criticism. The studies that do consider walking as integral features in particular films tend to focus on its use alongside representations of the female body, or as an extension of Arnold's corporeal aesthetic. None of the studies evaluated below provide a detailed examination of walking as a chronotope, and as such this thesis contributes the first comprehensive analysis of walking in Arnold's films.

Whilst Luis Antunes (2015) references the aesthetics of some walking scenes, these are incidental to his essay on Arnold's *Wuthering Heights*. He does not consider the importance of walking from a chronotopic perspective or acknowledge its importance to narrative meaning. Nor does he examine how Arnold's version departs from previous interpretations in its portrayal of walking as a means of agency and resistance. Harmanpreet Kaur's essay on *Fish Tank* connects walking and resistance, stating that "city space is reclaimed by wandering women for their psychic and physical emancipation from the cloistered interior space" (2012: 2). However, even though Kaur recognizes the "semi-urban desolation" (2012: 14), and Arnold's motivations for setting the film on the Mardyke estate, she refers only to the "decaying landscape" (Kaur, 2012: 15), whereas I argue that Arnold's locations possess their own sensory qualities and offer an alternative, and less pessimistic, reading of urban space.

Fish Tank is also the subject of Sarah Smyth's more recent study (2019) of female subjectivity in contemporary British films. Smyth identifies the importance of

flânerie, arguing that such films “[deploy] the figure of the *flâneuse* in a different way to the traditional conceptualisation of the bourgeois, metropolitan, male *flâneur*” (2019: 113, italics in the original). Smyth also suggests Mia’s walking, in its aimlessness, reflects the wandering of the *flâneuse*. However, Smyth’s observation is modified by her recognition that this aimlessness suggests “[Mia’s] impoverishment rather than the traditional bourgeois status of the *flâneur*, since she cannot afford public transport or more structured leisure activities” (2019: 197, italics in the original). Following Lynsey Hanley, Smyth suggests that flânerie on a council estate is inhibited by the labyrinthine nature of such places (see also Hanley, 2012: 125). There is some traction in this interpretation, but by repositioning Mia as a haptic *flâneuse*, I argue that the intrinsic sensory subjectivity of her walking enables rich interactions with social space that reflect a contemporary re-reading of the *flâneuse*. Furthermore, Smyth’s argument that flânerie is a reflection of interiority (2019: 116) is problematic. Such a view implies that walking is a form of solipsism and neglects its vital narrative function. Therefore, although there are some moments when Arnold’s walking journeys are outward manifestations of a character’s psyche, Smyth’s argument is only partially adopted in my study.

Previous studies that address the narrative importance of walking are mainly confined to *Red Road*, and focus especially on the film’s conclusion which presents Jackie’s shift from behind the camera lens to a position in front of it. Liz Watkins comments on the correlation between this narrative change and the film’s aesthetic shift (2015: 104). Watkins is not alone in noting the shift between Jackie’s optic, and virtual, flânerie at the start of the film and her physical flânerie at its conclusion (see also Dave, 2011) and I explore this further in chapter four. Jessica Lake also discusses mobility in the form of Jackie’s adoption of surveillance tactics, and also

comments on the haptic qualities of the film, particularly evident in Jackie's pursuit of Clyde "into the wasteland of poverty" (2010: 236) which is the Red Road estate. However, although Lake hints at the haptic relationship between women and walking, this is not developed into a fully realised examination of the chronotopicity of walking and its significance to the film's meaning.

Sue Thornham also uses *Red Road's* concluding scene as an opportunity to comment on walking. (2016). Like Lake and Dave, Thornham notes how the film's conclusion transforms Jackie into "de Certeau's streetwalker re-imagined as woman: a redefined *flâneuse*" (2019: 76, italics in the original). Thornham's brief acknowledgement of Jackie's *flânerie* reinforces my concern with revisioning the *flâneuse* for a contemporary world. For Thornham, Jackie is "a *flâneuse* whose life *touches* that of those she meets" (2019: 75, italics in the original), and this movement from optic to haptic visuality describes just one of the threads that runs through my study. However, my engagement with walking is not merely an extension of existing scholarship. Acknowledging these brief, separate studies of walking in Arnold's films, this work offers a significant contribution to the discipline of film by identifying the chronotope as a way of examining the importance of walking not only for its narrative significance, but for its effects on female subjectivity, interactions with space, and for its representation of historical, social, and cultural discourses. These discourses of space, particularly related to Arnold's depiction of urban locations, dominate studies of Arnold's work, and in the next section I examine how her portrayal of geographical space contributes to, and deviates from, received notions of negative place image and, by extension, her own position as social realist filmmaker.

Walking, Social Realism, and an Edgeland Aesthetic

Whilst scholarly work on the flâneuse concentrates predominantly on her experiences in the city, this study shifts the focus to other areas of the modern built environment. The locations of Arnold's films, the social classes she depicts, and their narratives of familial tensions invite critics to classify her films as British social realism. In *Red Road*, for example, the flats are described as "terrifying" (McCalmont, 2010: n.p.), "grim" (McGill, 2006: n.p.), full of "foul-mouthed, drunken people" (French 2006: n.p.) and compared to "a descent into hell ... a post-apocalyptic wasteland, littered with trash (human and non-human) and cast-off remnants of civilization" (Emerson, 2007: n.p.).

However, these opinions contrast with Arnold's own impressions of such places. In fact, she states that she is "fed up with that word [grim]. I think people are always looking for simplistic ways for summing things up" (in Smith, 2010). Matthew Eng suggests that Arnold's films offer a perspective of the world that challenges these assumptions, not by resorting to the overt political didacticism evident in other British social realist films, but by combining authenticity with a poetic aesthetic (2017: n.p.). Other scholars also reject simplistic responses to her films. Bolton, for example, states that Arnold's work foregrounds "individual experience ... against tired narratives of alienated youth and broken families" (2016: 83). Nick Roddick also argues that it is reductive to equate depictions of social housing with social realism, and to do so ignores the aesthetic value of her work (in Fuller, 2010: n.p.). This debate about Arnold's place within the conventions of British social realism is reflected in her own concerns about the way her films are interpreted. Indeed, she states that: "If I'd been thinking, 'I'm going to make a social realist film,' then perhaps

I wouldn't have done things like that and something would have been lost" (Arnold in Fuller, 2007).⁷

This thesis also identifies the importance of edgeland locations in Arnold's work, and how they function as spaces of liminality through which characters pass on their way to narrative and emotional transformations. The term 'edgelands' was coined by Marion Shoard in 2002 to refer to those spaces that exist at the interstices of the built environment. Edgelands incorporate sites as diverse as canal paths, wasteland, container and storage yards, landfill sites, allotments, disused mines, as well as out-of-town retail, industrial, and commercial zones. Indeed, the diversity of these sites is reflected in the variety of terms used to describe them. Shoard calls them the "truer wildernesses" of the modern age (2002: 9); Joanne Lee refers to them as "terrain vague" and "blank spaces on the A-Z map" (2014: n.p.); and Anna Jorgensen and Richard Keenan describe them as "urban wildscapes" (2012).

⁷ Recent scholarship recognises similar themes and styles in the work of other contemporary women filmmakers such as Clio Barnard and Lynne Ramsay. Barnard's films, particularly *The Arbor* (2010) and *The Selfish Giant* (2013), place "a greater emphasis on the poetic potentials of realist imagery at the expense of social-political didacticism" (Forrest 2010: 33). Haptic visuality and poetic realisations of the landscape are also identified in Ramsay's work, in particular *Ratcatcher* (1999) and *Morvern Callar* (2001). Catherine Cullen (2001) notes Ramsay's use of sound and image to create intimacy between film and spectator. Likewise, Annette Kuhn argues that Ramsay realises the "beautiful in the ugly" (2008: 10), whilst also identifying her use of haptic techniques to dissolve the threshold between audience and cinematic world

Existing on the periphery of modern urban space, the anonymity of the edgelands is either in their bland functionality or their supposed disorder and unattractiveness.

However, rather than spaces of decay and ruin, edgelands are viewed increasingly as “a new kind of frontier with an emergent sense of uniqueness” (Chell 2013: n.p.), possessing an essential quality of their own. Farley and Roberts describe them as “shifting sands of possibility, mystery, beauty ... decay and stasis ... [which are] dynamic and deeply mysterious” (2012: 6-7), whilst the artist Laura Oldfield Ford uses the term “spectral presences” to describe the atmosphere of memory, loss and otherness inherent in the edgelands (2014: n.p.). This re-envisioning of hitherto negatively coded space contributes to a discourse of marginal aesthetics that encourages an engagement with the tactile and sensory qualities of such places. Even though John Barr argues that the poeticising of dereliction and wasteland is the province of “academic opinion-makers, usually living far from the nearest spoil-heap” (1970: 25), these contemporary studies consider urban, edgeland, and other post-industrial spaces within a renewed discourse of sensory vitality.

Arnold’s evocation of these sites is one I have referred to previously as an edgeland aesthetic (Hanson, 2015). Visually, the edgeland aesthetic is evident in the recurring shots of wildlife and foliage present amidst the built environment. It is also characterised by the cinematography, namely the deployment of a haptic visual style and the use of lingering shots of the landscape which combine to encourage an absorption into cinematic space, thus providing the walking chronotope with its geographical and aesthetic properties. Arnold’s depiction of the edgelands is also alluded to in other critical responses to her films. Matthew Gandy, for example, describes her ability to imbue an “element of wonder” (2013: 1310) into everyday

landscapes. Likewise, Forrest claims that Arnold's films possess the ability to deliver "a lingering and lyrical treatment of location, suggesting the renaissance of a less prescriptive and more poetic realist address" (2010: 2), and reminding audiences that such places can signify momentary escape from the challenges of everyday life.

The proliferation of edgeland sites alongside social housing estates, dual carriageways, and other urban locations enables Arnold to construct a topography of the modern built environment which provides a vital setting for her haptic flâneuses. I borrow Hegglund's phrase "cinema of the modern built environment" (2013: 274), which he uses to describe Patrick Keiller's films, to describe Arnold's films. Like Keiller, Arnold employs images that juxtapose pastoral landscapes with symbols of industry and modernity that defamiliarise these everyday, and recognisable, locations. This perspective resonates with Arnold's own intention to encourage audiences to see her landscapes and her characters in a different light. As noted above, the so-called "grim" spaces of the edgelands are presented in more poetic ways to contradict the negative connotations that such places have accrued. Arnold's films therefore echo Keiller's "visual dissonance" (Hegglund, 2013), providing images that, whilst appearing redundant in terms of narrative, encourage the spectator to observe closely the play of time and space within the frame. Thus, a long-shot of a motorway flyover sits alongside soft verges populated with scrub; patches of wasteland combine with factories looming in the distance; close-ups of teasels, seed-heads, or buddleia sit alongside signifiers of modern industry and technology such as wind turbines or pylons.

In sum, Arnold's landscapes enable new interpretations of urban space that shift away from the relentlessly negative connotations afforded these locations. Her films promote working-class communities as sites of social cohesion, and her

approach to character defies preconceptions of these communities. This is particularly evident in her portrayal of single-mothers, as I will explore in the next chapter. However, as noted, in Arnold's films, it is predominantly white, female characters who walk, although in more recent work, specifically *Wuthering Heights* and *American Honey*, Arnold expands her cast list to include black protagonists, raising questions of diversity for her work and this study.

Walking and Diversity

In both *Wuthering Heights* and *American Honey*, the intersections of race and class contribute significantly to themes of exclusion and oppression. In her casting of a black actor in the role of Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, Arnold breaks with cinematic tradition and provides a post-colonial interpretation of the character which resonates with contemporary readings of Emily Brontë's novel. The treatment of Heathcliff within the film also reflects the context of the film's production, both with regard to its place in British heritage film and within a form of social realism that interrogates the connections between deprivation and attitudes to race. In *American Honey*, Star is mixed-race, inhabiting a world of financial and emotional poverty, and the only person of colour in the travelling community of magazine subscription sellers. Furthermore, Star's outsider-status is compounded by the tensions created by the character of Krystal (Riley Keough) whose pride in her southern heritage challenges questions of diversity and reinforces cultural stereotypes. In the chapter on *American Honey*, I explore Star's experience of walking within this context.

Recent criticism has begun to consider concepts central to my study in terms of wider, more diverse ethnic applications. Samar Aljahdali is the first scholar to use the chronotope of walking as an interpretative device, and even though he deploys

the term in a literary capacity, its application to post-colonial narratives has some relevance to this study, in particular its challenge to hegemonic norms. He describes how walking gives a voice to counter-hegemonic narratives that “[reroute] the postcolonial to understand Palestine as a settler colonial context” (2104: 218). In the texts he analyses, walking as a “political and discursive [act], perform[s] a textual rescue of a pre-colonial space-time, protesting against settler colonisation and the landscape of decay and imprisonment it produces” (Aljahdali, 2014: 227).

Likewise, Carol Leff’s thesis on “The Afropolitan Flâneur” (2020) offers an insight into representations of walking in African and Transnational texts. Here, she discusses the experiences of walking as an African in the metropolises of Johannesburg, London, New York, and Paris. Leff ends by offering a challenge to those interested in furthering her work, suggesting that “some might argue that [those who do not walk in the city] are not true flâneurs”. However, she also adds, with some optimism, that this might be “another story, another dimension, another path to be walked” (Leff, 2020: 253). Leff’s work parallels the research undertaken in this thesis whereby both examine the walking experiences of the marginalised, although this study’s focus on walking in everyday locations provides evidence that flânerie does not exist for the city alone.

Themes of marginalisation and exclusion also characterise contemporary BAME experiences of walking. Garnette Cadogan describes this succinctly when he declares that “[w]alking while black restricts the experience of walking, renders inaccessible the classic Romantic experience of walking alone” (2016: n.p.). Recently, these disparities between black and white experiences of walking have

been highlighted by the Black Lives Matter movement⁸ and the protests in response to the shooting of George Floyd⁹ in the United States, when even the simple act of walking to work might be a threat to a person's very existence (Desai, 2020). These real experiences of exclusion are not, for minority groups, confined to urban spaces. Hanna Lindon for example reports on low levels of BAME participation in outdoor walking activities, a disparity she suggests is due to the feeling that countryside activities are not for them: "a lot of people do see the outdoors as a white domain, a space where there is, unfortunately, always the threat of racism and prejudice" (Lindon, 2020).

Experiences of walking from disabled perspectives do not appear in Arnold's films. In fact, some scholars argue that *flânerie* describes an urban experience

⁸ The Black Lives Matter movement was founded in the United States. Their mission, as stated on their website, is "to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes" (About Black Lives Matter, 2020).

⁹ As reported in the New York Times on December 9th, 2020: "George Floyd, a 46-year-old African-American man, died on May 25 after being handcuffed and pinned to the ground by a white police officer's knee. The encounter, captured on video, incited large protests against police brutality and systemic racism in Minneapolis and more than 150 American cities in the weeks and months that followed." The Black Lives Matters protests subsequently extended to countries across the world and gained traction in the UK, including the removal by protestors of the statue of Edward Colston in Bristol on 7th June 2020. Colston's wealth was founded upon his links to slavery (Parkes, 2018).

beyond disabled walkers. Marian Rye, for example, states that “the art of flânerie entails blending into the crowd [and the] disabled flâneur can’t achieve this kind of invisibility” (2017: n.p.). Likewise, David Serlin admits that scholarly work on the flâneur continues “to perceive the notion of the flâneur as a paradigmatic example of the modern subject who takes the functions of his or her body for granted. (2006: 198). However, this is not to say that disabled experiences of walking are irrelevant to the relations between body and space explored in this thesis. Inger Marie Lid and Per Koren Solvang draw attention to the haptic experience of wheelchair use and describe the experience as “the fusion of body and technology” (2015: n.p.), whilst a visually impaired pedestrian’s walking stick provides a “tactile relationship between the body and the ground” (2015: n.p.). There is, however, more work to be done in this area, and I return to this in the conclusion. This language of embodied perception infuses these descriptions of the disabled walking experience and resonates with theories of cinematic affect which are discussed in the next section where the key theoretical aspects which inform this study are examined.

Methodology

This thesis employs the walking chronotope as an overarching interpretative framework that is underpinned by affect theories of cinematic experience.

Throughout the chapters that follow, I demonstrate how Bakhtin’s (1988) theory of the chronotope can be used to synthesise narrative, aesthetic, and contextual elements of the films to reveal how walking is far from an ancillary means to an end, but a significant cinematic device. Within this framework, Marks’ (2000) concept of haptic visuality is deployed, alongside the work of Deleuze (1992, 1994) and Lefebvre (2006a, 2006b), to examine how walking scenes create for the spectator a

sense of being in the world that encourages them to question their own assumptions about space and their relationship to the urban landscape. From this combination of walking and haptic visuality, this thesis proposes the new figure of the haptic flâneuse as a reminder that walking in film is not the preserve of the Bohemian artiste and the bourgeoisie, but also provides opportunities to examine the variety of everyday experiences in everyday places, whilst revealing them to be equally sensory and evocative.

Chronotopes and Thresholds

Literally translated as ‘time-space’, Bakhtin’s chronotopes are the vital motifs that encapsulate the temporal and spatial significance of a text: they are “the organising centres for the fundamental narrative events ... [and] the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied” (Bakhtin, 1988: 250). For Bakhtin, the chronotope should represent the world of the text and not the world itself (1988: 252-253) and make visible “historically specific constellations of power” (Stam, 1992: 11). The chronotope is described by Bakhtin using semantic fields of the body and of movement, influenced undoubtedly by his acquisition of the term from a lecture in biology (Bakhtin, 1988: 84). Thus, the chronotope causes time to “take on flesh” (1988: 84), and art “seizes on the chronotope in all its wholeness and fullness ... [and is] shot through with *chronotopic values*” (1988: 243, italics in the original). These biological and physiological metaphors are appropriate in that they relate closely to the notion of an affective cinematic experience, one that is highlighted by the methodology used to analyse the films herein.

Some of the questions posed in this study, as outlined earlier, are predicated on the visibility of walking as a major structural and narrative function, and the

chronotope is an important structural device. Mathieson states, with regard to walking journeys in nineteenth-century fiction, that “at times [they] form the centre-point of narrative action, a key moment in the plot’s development; in other instances they slip between the lines as seemingly little more than a narrative convenience” (2015: 1) and this will be demonstrated in the analysis of walking scenes in the chapters that follow. Likewise, Seymour Chatman distinguishes between the major and minor plot events in fiction (what he terms “kernels” and “satellites” respectively). Kernels, because of their importance to the plot, cannot be excised without losing narrative integrity. On the other hand, story satellites function as a means of joining together plot kernels: “their function is that of filling in, elaborating [or] completing the kernel” and can thus “be deleted without disturbing the logic of the plot” (Chatman, 1978: 54). Walking can be easily subsumed into the category of a satellite, but I argue that in Arnold’s films, the chronotopicity of walking is emphasised precisely because such scenes act as plot kernels.

The major chronotope of walking is underpinned by other minor chronotopes which are referred to explicitly by Bakhtin as the chronotopes of the road, of the threshold, and of the encounter. The chronotope of the road, writes Bakhtin, is a place where chance meetings occur (1988: 243-245), and his association of the road with chance meetings and familiar territory is an integral part of the walking chronotope as used in this study: they enable physical connections in ways that mechanical mobility cannot, and, in the chapters that follow, I examine how these different roads reinforce the films’ chronotopicity. Closely related to the road chronotope, the threshold chronotope exemplifies “the breaking point of a life, the moment of crisis, the decision that changes a life [and can consist of] ... places where crisis events occur” (Bakhtin, 1988: 248). Physical boundaries and borders of

urban and edgeland space can symbolise characters' emotional transformations. In some cases, these thresholds are revealed temporally, as in the elliptical transitions between scenes and chronological space, or spatially, as in the crossing-over between physical sites. For Annette Kuhn, these thresholds operate as spatial and psychical borders (2010: 87). For example, in her discussion of Ramsay's *Ratcatcher*, Kuhn argues that thresholds "imply a rather complex zone of transition, even a degree of permeability, between "home" and its proximate open spaces" (2010: 94).

In Arnold's films, windows constitute a dominant threshold motif. As Pidduck argues in her study of 1990s costume drama, windows provide a space for a desirous female gaze to look out on the potential of romance, marriage, and its concomitant wealth and security, but it is also a perspective that reminds them of the unattainable in the form of land and independence (1998: 35). The ambiguity of thresholds is particularly relevant in the chapter on *Red Road* in which the CCTV monitors function also as a site of surveillance, a form of Benthamite panopticon that provides the protagonist Jackie with a totalising view of the city. For Jeremy Bentham, the panopticon prison is designed for the constant surveillance of prisoners (2017). Within the panopticon, as Foucault describes it, the observer's control is generated by the observed individual's consciousness of being permanently watched (1982: 201). However, as I argue in relation to *Red Road*, the authority of the panopticon is problematised by the failure of the all-seeing eye to connect with people on an individual basis, seeing them only as abstract configurations. Furthermore, even though Pidduck describes the window as a threshold that implies a "certain potentiality" (1998: 28), I argue that Arnold's

characters succeed in crossing into the space beyond these windows and screens and fulfilling that potential.

Thresholds and Heterotopic Space

The CCTV screens in *Red Road* exemplify the many thresholds and heterotopic spaces that function in Arnold's films as sites of transformation. Heterotopias are those sites of transience and otherness which Foucault describes as being "outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality" (1986: 24). The heterotopia is a site of alterity, a space where reality is paused and bracketed off, or where it can be mirrored, subverted, and distorted. Foucault identifies several heterotopic types which overlap in meaning and function. There are the heterotopias of crisis such as prisons and hospitals; marginal or liminal heterotopias such as the cemetery; contradictory sites such as gardens and theatrical spaces; sites of fantasy and escape such as fairgrounds and holiday complexes; sites of ritual, purification and illusion such as barracks, motels (and again, prisons); or sites of compensation, such as colonies and other forms of micro-nation (Foucault, 1986).

The heterotopia is a mutable concept (see Johnson, 2016, for a fuller discussion),¹⁰ and various places function as heterotopia in Arnold's films. Domestic sites such as flats and houses and places of work signify familiarity and ordinariness, but the films also include sites of transition and of impermeability, including, as noted above, edgeland locations, the CCTV images on Jackie's screens in *Red Road*, and

¹⁰As Peter Johnson points out "The illustrations are so wide and diverse that most if not all social sites share some aspects" (2016: 2).

even the suburbs in *American Honey*. The aforementioned moors in *Wuthering Heights* also function as heterotopic sites of play and escape, outside of the environs of normative institutions or prescribed behaviours. As Tony Blackshaw suggests, “in heterotopia, individuals do not try to resist reality so much as escape it – and in so doing creatively find their own place in it” (2016: 141).

Perhaps the most prominent heterotopia in these films, however, is the automobile. As Christopher Duffy argues, the car-cabin is “a heterotopia of illusion” amplified by its separation from the world outside (2015: 149), whilst, for Gerard Kuperus, the state of constant mobility and separation from the world outside crystallises the car’s heterotopic qualities (2016: 90). Indeed, Arnold’s characters are metaphorically and literally in transit, moving between physical or emotional states as well as geographical ones. Furthermore, whilst walking for Arnold’s protagonists provides agency, their control over other mechanical forms of mobility is restricted. Cars and buses carry them away from their familiar environments into sites of desire, threat, or potential release. In addition, automobiles in Arnold’s films are sites of deviation and crisis, often compounded by the presence of men.

Walking and the Cinema of Affect

The dominant mode of analysis employed in this thesis derives from Laura U. Marks’ study of haptic visibility, but it also draws on Lefebvre’s (2006a, 2006b) and Deleuze’s (1992, 1994) work on aesthetic affect. Below, I trace the connections between these three authors and examine how these impact upon the mode of textual analysis employed in this study. Finally, I consider these theories alongside Richard Rushton’s notion of absorption (2000) to provide a detailed map of the analytical methodology used here.

Marks defines haptic visuality as being concerned with the image as a stimulant for the other senses, notably that of touch, and it is articulated through the use of visuals that resist narrative coherence (Marks, 2000: 169). Whilst conventional mainstream cinema directs the spectator's gaze using traditional film grammar, haptic cinema immerses the audience into the cinematic world through images that disorient, alienate, and defamiliarise (evident in *Red Road's* opening sequence, or the moorland scenes in *Wuthering Heights*, for example). The haptic look, for Marks, does not "distinguish form so much as to discern texture. It is more inclined to move than to focus, more inclined to graze than to gaze" (Marks 2000: 162). By this, Marks suggests that haptic cinema foregrounds the sensory, and sensual, properties of film to evoke senses other than the visual, thus requiring audiences to be more active in their reading of the image.

Similar impressions of absorption are evoked by what Lefebvre refers to as "impure" or "intentional" landscapes. These images, where space is framed in ways which creates distance and separation from the perspective of character (Lefebvre, 2006a: 29), also provide opportunities to consider the importance of the image as discrete from its narrative significance. Such images perform more than the obvious function of establishing narrative time and place: instead, they present space as *space*, inviting contemplation of the layers of meaning present within the frame. In a similar vein, Bruno refers to such images as "tempi morti", which translates as "dead times", that "makes us stay when characters leave, feeding on the leftovers of the story, exploring the space they traversed and lived" (Bruno, 2002: 99). Connecting both these concepts is the idea that these images both disconnect the landscape from the diegesis and characters, yet at the same time enabling the spectator to, as Bruno suggests, "[bond] with the space of their inhabitation" (2002" 99).

The chapters that follow thus analyse Arnold's depiction of landscape using these concepts of haptic visuality, but in addition to reading her images from a Lefebvrian perspective, the work of Deleuze, in particular his theory of the time-image, also provides a method of analysing the image's temporal and spatial qualities. Marks distinguishes between three of Deleuze's main cinematic concepts: the movement-image, the time-image, and the affection image (2000: 27). The movement-image is characterised by classical narrative logic and causality for its meaning; in contrast, the time-image breaks with this classic model of film grammar and instead describes an aesthetic style attributed to European directors such as Antonioni and Jean-Luc Godard. Finally, the affection-image, falling between the movement-image and the time-image, is described by Deleuze as that which is "felt, rather than conceived: it concerns what is new in experience, what is fresh, fleeting and nevertheless eternal" (Deleuze, 1992: 98). The epitome of the affection-image for Deleuze is the close-up which reduces the background of the shot and invites the spectator into the body of the film (1992: 107). To this end, Deleuze argues that the affective potential of cinema is perhaps its defining characteristic, one that is singular in its ability to create the physical intimacy between spectator and film world. Deleuze's theory thus permits a reading of the screen image that reveals its spatial and temporal qualities (Deleuze, 1994: xii). As an example from Arnold's films, the time-image is evident in those scenes where forms of nature occupy the same space as graffitied walls and discarded objects, and therefore provide a means of exploring the landscape as a palimpsest, with walking scenes opening up these spaces for examination.

Arnold's landscapes of marginality and of urban deprivation also bear comparison to that element of Deleuze's affection-image referred to as "any-space

whatevers" (1992). These are "deconnected or emptied spaces" and "amorphous" zones that "coexist independently of the temporal order" and thus can be identified as liminal and transitional spaces (Deleuze 1992: 120). For Deleuze, the physical locations of these any-space-whatevers are indeterminable. Similar to Lee's "blanks spaces on the A-Z map" (2014, n.p.), the any-space-whatever is without co-ordinates, unplottable, and can be characterised by post-war industrial locations with "towns demolished or being reconstructed, its waste grounds, its shanty towns ... its undifferentiated urban tissue, its vast unused places, dock, warehouses, heaps of girders, scrap-irons" (Deleuze, 1992: 20). The edgelands in Arnold's films reflect these sites of "pure potential" (Deleuze, 1992: 120), their aesthetic qualities enhanced by the combination of haptic cinematography and images of the built environment that foreground nature's poetic qualities. The edgeland aesthetic is therefore not merely a spatial concept, but one that is infused with time itself. Indeed, the contemporary poeticisation of edgelands may well be a response to what Martine Beugnet refers to as art's continuing search for meaning amidst the "unrelenting, catastrophic after-effects" of post-colonialism, globalisation, displacement of populations, and "dehumanising practices ... that affect our world" (2012: 58).

By inviting the spectator into her world through the combination of time- and affection-images, Arnold provides an affective film experience that resonates with Rushton's notion of absorption. Rushton argues that through a process of absorption, the Deleuzian spectator wilfully enters the screen environment (2009: 50). Reading Arnold's work through Rushton's concept of absorption counters critics who claim that her work ignores wider social issues. Charles Nwonka, for example, suggests that Arnold's camera, in its "almost surveillance-like hawking" of her subjects actually restricts "any broader contextual reading for the spectator" (2014:

212). By acknowledging the role of absorption, it can be argued that the “surveillance-like hawking”, to which Nwonka refers, actually encourages the viewer to become part of Arnold’s world, and thereby to understand the social, physical, and geographical impulses, impositions, and influences that drive behaviour. Indeed, Arnold herself declares that her intention is to encourage audiences to become “more intimately involved with what’s going on, so that they maybe can experience it a little bit more intensely” (quoted in Fuller, 2009).

The sense of absorption is heightened by Arnold’s use of sound. Although Marks admits that her theory of haptic visuality “remains largely silent on the question of sound” (2000: 182), she recognises its importance as a medium of haptic expression where the “relationship between aural textures and aural signs can be as complex as the relationship between haptic and optical images” (2000: 183). For Marks, the haptic qualities of sound are particularly resonant at moments of aural extremities, when sounds might be indistinct or else foregrounded (2000: 183), and I borrow Bela Balazs phrase “acoustic close-ups” (2010: 185) to describe sounds that create an intimate relationship with the visual image. Indeed, this is Arnold’s stated intention. She says that: “I tried to make the sound design ... a celebration of the people living on that estate enjoying themselves. There are all kinds of things [in the films] that counteract a bleak picture” (in Fuller, 2010: n.p.). In the textual analysis that follows, I refer to sound as another element contributing to the sense of absorption in Arnold’s films. The soundscapes employed, from the rain falling or the claspings of mud in *Wuthering Heights*, to the scraping of hands along a bed of gravel in *Fish Tank*, revivifies the acoustic space and evokes a sensory and embodied experience of the cinematic world.

Absorption is further enhanced by what I refer to as ‘elemental modality’ which describes the affective experience Arnold creates through the relationship between walking and the natural environment. Thus, the textures of the earth, the sensation of rain on skin, the embodied reaction to heat, and the rush of air from open windows all enhance the sensory response to the visual image. The phrase ‘elemental modality’ appears in scholarship from a variety of disciplines to describe the individual’s relationship to the natural world, for example political economy (Levine, 1998), humanism (Ikeda, 2010), and spirituality (Todd, 2014). Daisaku Ikeda defines elemental modality as a process “through which humans discover their bonds with humans, humanity with nature, and humanity with the universe” (2010: 4), and David Levine refers to it as the act of “thinking about the individual’s relation to the world outside” (1998: 116). These definitions are relevant to the experiential qualities of Arnold’s cinematic design which imbricates, as Antunes states, “the phenomenology of the characters’ bodies and the textures of the materials and elements of nature” (2015: 3).

Images of water and of earth are prevalent, reinforcing the elementality of the films. These recurring images of water also reinforce the threshold chronotope. As Lindner suggests, “water can be associated with a sense of disorientation because it implies a threshold into a different world, one in which normative and familiar rules of gravity and bodily movement do not apply” (2012: 212). The presence of water as a threat is particularly noticeable in *Fish Tank*, either accompanying scenes of potential disaster or functioning as an important structural device.

These aesthetic elements combine to create a particular mood in Arnold’s films that extends beyond their narrative content. In using the term ‘mood’, I adopt Robert Sinnerbrink’s definition which describes mood as the way in which “a

(fictional) world is expressed or disclosed via a shared affective attunement orienting the spectator within the world” (2012: 148). For Sinnerbrink, mood exists separate from a viewer’s ability to fully grasp narrative content, and instead emerges from the link between “cinematic aesthetics, the revealing of a meaningful cinematic world, and subjective responsiveness” (2012: 150). Through the cinematic design outlined above, Arnold creates a mood that elevates these ordinary spaces, and the bodies therein, beyond the mundane, or negatively-coded, impressions that such locations provoke.

Chapter Two: Emergent Chronotopes and Edgeland Aesthetics in Arnold's Short Films (*Milk*, 1998, *Dog*, 2001, and *Wasp*, 2003)

Milk

Even though Arnold's first film, *Milk*, is just over ten minutes long, its only walking scene is vital to understanding the narrative. After suffering a stillbirth, a traumatised Hetty refuses to go to her baby's funeral. Whilst her husband Ralph (Stephen McGann) attends the ceremony, Hetty walks into town and meets a young man, Martin (Lee Oakes). Together they embark on a joyride which culminates in casual sex in a darkened country lane. The film explores the psychology of grief and loss, and its walking scene shifts the narrative and cinematic mode from one of situational and emotional stasis to one that illustrates the transformative power of movement. Indeed, if a walking scene were to exemplify something more than a "transition between two events" (Çağlayan, 2020: n.p.), then it is the one that divides in half the narrative of *Milk*.



Figure 1: Hetty confined within domestic space (*Milk*, Andrea Arnold: 1998).

The montage that opens the film plots the story of Hetty's pregnancy, from conception to miscarriage, in a series of elliptical jump-cuts that shift between various locations: the kitchen, the bedroom, the hospital (and a hospital bed), and finally Hetty's bathroom. In the opening scene, she is filmed in mid-shot cooking breakfast, squeezed into the frame by the clutter of domesticity. Low lighting and earthy colours such as the browns of Hetty's woollen cardigan and the wooden furniture imbue the image with a dull everydayness (see figure 1). Indeed, throughout the duration of this opening sequence, Hetty is static and often obscured: she lies beneath Ralph as they have sex; she is prostrate in the darkened bedroom just as she realises that she has miscarried; upon her arrival at the hospital she emerges from the car on the opposite side to the camera, so that only the upper part of her body can be seen; and finally, as she is rushed to surgery, she is hidden completely hidden by the medical team (see figure 2).



Figure 2: Hetty obscured in the frame (*Milk*, Andrea Arnold: 1998).

This visual erasure of Hetty's identity is thus signified by her traditional roles as housewife, lover, and potential mother. Furthermore, her immobile body is juxtaposed with Ralph's more active, and thus stereotypically male, role: he is the

initiator of lovemaking, he drives Hetty to the hospital, and it is he who rushes into the hospital foyer calling desperately for help.

The conventional editing of the opening sequence, however, is disrupted in the subsequent shots. As Hetty is transported along the corridor in a wheelchair, the film image visually breaks down in a transition lasting seven seconds, the picture blurring as the figures dissolve into the space of the frame. By disturbing the pattern of jump-cuts that has characterised the film thus far, this image succeeds in slowing down the narrative pace. In addition, the fusion between space and bodies caused by this blurring suggests a spatio-temporal dissolution which also signifies the moment of rupture between Hetty's body and that of her unborn child, and a breakdown in the rhythms of her life itself. Later, when she returns from hospital, the cinematic image continues to fragment Hetty. As she sits immobile in the bath, staring vacantly into space and frozen in grief, she is held in a 20-second mid-shot before the film cuts to a close-up of her lactating breast. In the next scene, Hetty's head and shoulders are reflected in her dressing-table mirror as she informs Ralph of her decision not to attend the baby's funeral, but these fragmentations are a rupture in the film's mood, and draw attention to the shattered emotions at play.

Whereas walking and mobility as a whole is preeminent in Arnold's later work, the opening sequence to *Milk* is singular in its elision of the journey. The lacunae at the start of the film condense the narrative both in time and in space with each individual element of the montage cutting to a new location and new event. The vital process of getting to each of these locations is erased, lost in the interstices of each scene. Furthermore, everyday locations demarcate Hetty's existence: her life is partitioned into the kitchen, bedroom, hospital, and bathroom and so she appears defined according to suburban and domestic routines. Yet this restriction of spatial

movement is in sharp contrast to the turbulence of her psychological and emotional state, and only when Hetty breaks from these confines does she begin to encounter the world in a more tactile and experiential way. From this moment on in the film, mobility is prioritised, and with it the sensory and tactile interactions with space that characterise Arnold's subsequent films.

Walking as Release

Hetty's decision not to attend the baby's funeral leads to her independence within both the narrative and cinematic space of the film. As Ralph departs for the ceremony, a matched edit replaces his car on screen with a full-shot of Hetty walking alone in a busy High Street. Initially obscured by the blurred figures of other pedestrians in the foreground, she emerges into view with her hands held against her stomach. This seven second long, slow-motion shot, accompanied by a reflective soundtrack of minor chord strings, reinforces the sense of Hetty's disconnection from the world. Although the images of Ralph's car and Hetty's body are linked through grief, the replacement of mechanical with physical mobility is also an important signifier of the emotional gap between the couple.

The structural significance of this brief walking scene is vital to the chronotopicity of the film, functioning as a narrative threshold which enables Hetty to successfully disconnect from the emotional crises which have hitherto afflicted her. By creating a space independent of the restraints of the funeral car and the rituals of mourning, she is liberated both narratively, as a character, and cinematically, in the *mise-en-scène*. Furthermore, in temporal terms, the film itself is literally slowed down to provide narrative time for reflection. Hetty's blank gaze, combined with the cinematography and sound, suggest that, in her *flânerie*, she has become "unaware

of time but aesthetically and sensually attached to space” (Haaland 2013: 596).

Although only a few seconds long, Hetty’s walk will ultimately shift the whole trajectory of the film’s narrative.

As Hetty emerges through the bodies in the street, her attention is drawn to a young man, Martin, sitting on a bench. This visual exchange is filmed in a conventional shot-reverse shot sequence. Hetty’s gaze as she looks at Martin is inquiring, as indicated by the fact that it is her look which prompts his attention, the flâneuse here adopting what Haaland calls “a detached yet confrontational mode of voyeurism” (2013: 600). The two characters are noticeably similar: both have blonde hair and wear pale grey tops. Furthermore, when they sit together on the bench, their likeness is pronounced through their posture: both have their arms folded and smoke their cigarettes simultaneously. Martin’s appearance, just at the moment that her own child is being laid to rest, can be read as an uncanny doubling that synthesises Hetty and the dead baby with the young man, fusing both time and bodies. In Martin, Hetty can identify a replacement for her lost child, and with it a chance to fill the void left by its loss. Indeed, later on, after she has sex with Martin, his suckling at her breast will permit Hetty to re-establish herself as both sexual woman and nurturing mother whilst also offering her the chance, through potential impregnation, to replace her dead child.

At the same time as the film foregrounds mobility in this scene, it also asks us to consider the importance of everyday space in effecting an emotional and embodied connection to character. At first, domestic space is a reminder of despair and loss, as well as a signifier of containment, and only when Hetty enters public places does she possess the agency to exorcise her emotional crisis. With its familiar red pillar-boxes, bicycles chained to trees, homogeneous storefronts,

wheelie bins and steel meshed benches, the location could be any High Street in any town, but this everyday street also functions as a site where Hetty can begin to reconstruct herself. These ordinary spaces thus provide Hetty with a sense of belonging as well as escape. Her interaction with Martin is spontaneous, and the location's familiarity provides a necessary return to a sense of normality that previous events have disrupted.

Car as Heterotopic Space

Car journeys in *Milk* double as sites of loss and of renewal. As his car drives off to the funeral, a grief-stricken Ralph is filmed in close-up, accompanied by mournful non-diegetic music (see figure 3). The car windows are closed, and this image of confinement is in contrast to the open space and mobile dynamics of the next shot which reveals Hetty in the car with Martin. Here, a fast, contemporary dance rhythm changes the mood of the film completely, from one of grief to one of abandon, a mood reinforced by the high-angle shot of the car as it races from left to right along a dual carriageway. The camera cuts in to show the pair together in the front seats,



Figure 3: the car as confining space (*Milk*, Andrea Arnold: 1998).



Figure 4: the car as a liberating space (*Milk*, Andrea Arnold: 1998).

before Hetty leans out of the window to feel the wind against her face (see figure 4).

This latter shot is held for five seconds, and is, as Jacobs points out, a moment of exhilaration in motion with “[t]he anarchic energy in this scene liberat[ing] the viewer and Hetty for that moment into a pure, pleasurable sensation of movement” (2016: 168). At this point in the film, Arnold encourages an embodied spectatorial response, foregrounding the senses through a tactile immersion into the film’s world. This is movement as the haptic “touch of space” (Bruno, 2002: 250). Furthermore, the window itself acts as a symbolic threshold through which both Hetty and the narrative itself has passed. Instead of destination being prioritised over journey as it was in the opening sequence, the journey has now become vital, and more important than the end itself. As Bruno observes, emotion is bound up with “a matter of voyage ... a moving out, a migration, a transference from place to place” (2002: 262), and it is in this transference, this movement between, that Hetty is able to temporarily transcend geographical and emotional space.

The film ends in the non-space of a country road, an iteration of the deviant heterotopia, signifying as it does here a site for transgressive and secretive encounters. Martin's car is parked facing downhill, a canopy of trees forming an arboreal tunnel at the end of which a gossamer white light spreads across the darkness: the *mise-en-scène* here conveying all the traditional symbols of rebirth and renewal. Inside, Hetty watches Martin drink from a bottle, and her gaze, neither longing nor desirous, seeks only to complete the void in her own being. Her hands search for his body and, as she is penetrated by Martin, Arnold cuts to a close-up of an earthy mound, her baby's freshly dug grave, before cutting back to Hetty's sombre post-coital expression. Spatially, the film switches from one heterotopic space to another: from the graveyard, which as Foucault observes, is a space "where each family possesses its dark resting place" (1984: 6), to the car's interior, where Martin is suckling at Hetty's breast which relieves the build-up of post-partum milk and providing a cathartic release of her trauma. The sex scene is de-eroticised through this image, and which Jacobs sees as "a complex, ambivalent viewing experience" (2016: 171). Martin's body becomes important not in its performative sexual significance but in his role as substitute for the lost child. Furthermore, the flash of the grave becomes a moment of realisation of Hetty's own sense of loss. She is finally able to identify with her maternal self, one that has been lost or subsumed beneath the debilitating mask of grief, as well as with her desiring sexual body. The journey with Martin has thus enabled her to escape her grief, with the heterotopic space of the car becoming also a site of renewal and catharsis.

Although the chronotope of walking is more developed in Arnold's future work, its importance is no less evident in *Milk*. In its conclusion, the film denies conventional narrative closure by its refusal to return Hetty to domestic space. This

freedom is in contrast to the restricted visuals of the opening scenes, and in this way it can be seen to emphasise the importance of mobility whilst providing Hetty with the “power-to” write her own story (Sutherland and Feltey 2017: 625). By escaping the domestic, Hetty steps out into the landscape to experience the pleasures of touch and taste: the smoking of a cigarette, forbidden during pregnancy, and the wind on her face through the open window of a travelling car. In this way, Arnold presents the audience with a flâneuse for whom the experience of movement triggers a sense of renewal through her haptic engagement with a world outside the domestic one. Even though the act of walking is limited to one brief scene in this film, it provides a hinge upon which transformation is predicated, and reflects de Certeau’s declaration that stories begin at “ground level, with footsteps” (1988: 97). Furthermore, it challenges the notion that walking scenes that are not necessarily extended might have little narrative significance (Çağlayan, 2020).

Dog

Whilst walking is allocated only a small amount of screen time in *Milk*, in *Dog* it constitutes 25 per cent of the film’s nine-minute duration. Furthermore, if Hetty’s brief walk triggers a journey of renewal in that film, then Leah’s (Joanne Hill), walking in *Dog* opens up the landscape as a symbolic representation of physical and social paralysis. In addition, the chronotope’s vitality is evoked through the hand-held camera, through the sensory richness evoked by the rhythms of life, traffic, bodies, and locations, whilst the wasteland, council flats, and dual carriageways reinforce the film’s edgeland aesthetic. By invited the audience into Leah’s world, Arnold asks

them to question their assumptions about young women living in challenging and deprived conditions.¹¹

The film tells the story of a teenage girl, Leah, who lives with her abusive mother (Veronica Valentine) in a flat on a housing estate. After stealing some money from her mother's purse, Leah walks off to meet her boyfriend, John. Their subsequent fumbled sexual encounter on a piece of wasteland ends in violent aggression as John kicks to death a stray dog that has eaten his stash of cannabis. Horrified, Leah runs back home only to be verbally and physically abused by her mother. Whilst protecting herself, Leah's verbal response is extraordinary, emitting a series of feral growls and barks. Leah's physical and geographical trajectory in this film is both circular and regressive. The walking chronotope signals paralysis rather than escape, whilst the film's title is apposite not only because of the dog which John kills but also because Leah herself adopts the animal's vacant position. Leah's barking at her mother at the end of the film thus suggests both an empathy for the dead animal and a verbal regression to a language inadequate in capturing the frustrations of her own existence.

Lingering images of the landscape once again establish a semi-poetic feel to the scene. The film opens with an image of a bird flying across an open grey sky and as the camera tracks its path from left to right, this image of natural freedom gives way to massed ranks of tower blocks which fill two-thirds of the frame. As the bird exits the frame to the right, the camera lingers on the buildings implying the erasure

¹¹ "*Dog* would set the tone for what we would come to expect from Andrea Arnold; not just her approach to realism, but also in how she explores the lives of impoverished young people" (Flores: 2014).

of nature beneath the overwhelming presence of urban geography. In the next shot, Leah zips up her skirt, an action that subtly reinforces the motif of confinement, as do the subsequent shots of her flat's interior, with its tightly framed, claustrophobic spaces filled with the verticals of doorways and the clutter of domesticity.



Figure 5: walking through edgeland space (*Dog*, Andrea Arnold: 2001).

Although Leah's mother is unaware of her daughter's pilfering, she still berates Leah for wearing clothes that make her look like a "fucking whore". As Leah runs away long a narrow external corridor, cluttered with washing-lines and concrete pillars, the camera remains behind her still-cursing mother. This shot is followed by a high-angle of Leah walking along a ribbon of worn ground that forms a narrow pathway between blocks of flats on one side and an industrial site on the other, a route that is practically a match-cut to the geometry of the previous shot (see figure 5). Leah thus appears caught between the lines of the path as the neat diagonals of the narrow defile converge towards a murky, misty horizon.

This long-shot shifts to a series of mid-shots that frame Leah tightly against the dreary ground, enclosing her in the cinematic space. However, the substitution of a narrow corridor for an edgeland path also suggests a sense of freedom. The route

along which Leah travels is geographically higher than the space it cuts through, implying a spatial hierarchy that elevates this dour location above its even less salubrious surroundings. Furthermore, Leah's bright red jacket infuses the dreary grey and brown image with a flash of colour. Leah walks at a medium pace, taking in her surroundings, and lingering as she passes a dog identical to that which will later be killed by her boyfriend. Mid-shots of Leah's face reveal a reflective mood, enhanced by the ambient electronic soundtrack. In the next shot, Leah is displaced by an image of an aeroplane soaring overhead, descending diagonally from the centre to the left of the screen. This inserted shifts the emphasis away from Leah to a powerful symbol of travel and escape, whilst continuing the dynamic sense of movement within the frame, a movement intensified when a truck flashes across the frame from left to right. The proximity of the truck to the surface of the screen enhances further the sense of absorption into the film world.

This movement is continued in the next image, a three-second shot which frames the lower half of Leah's legs as she walks right to left. Again, the ambient sounds of footsteps squelching into grass, along with the hiss of passing cars, increase the sense of immediacy and foregrounds the tactility of the scene. The cut back to a mid-shot of Leah, waiting to cross the busy road and enjoying the attention given by the hooting horns of passing drivers, completes the sequence. Her position in the frame indicates further confinement: she stands in the gutter, squeezed to the right-hand side of the screen which itself is intersected by the diagonals of the road-side barriers, the pavement and the wide channel of the kerb. However, she sticks out her tongue in defiance, or enjoyment, of the attention she receives. Leah's irreverence, combined with the *mise-en-scène* and the vitality of the camera, imbues the walking scene with a sense of playful independence. However, only temporarily

liberated from violence, this is the last scene in the film in which Leah walks alone. Once again, it is the walk that is important, and its chronotopicity is reinforced not only by its structural significance, but by its evocation of place and time. The walk as an event has taken Leah away from a bullying mother, across a murky track that appears to provide a sense of freedom and agency, to a meeting with her boyfriend John who, in treating her as a mere commodity, perpetuates physically her mother's verbal misogyny and prejudice.

Noticing John from the other side of the road, Leah asks that he "waits up", and the subsequent scenes reveal the imbalance in the film's gender dynamic. In contrast to Leah's more reflective movements, John marches along the road: his purposive walk indicative of a confident masculinity aligned with power and ownership of geographical space. He enters the shot from the right, and the empty space to the left of the frame is his to own. Significantly, it is Leah who crosses the busy road to meet him. To enable John the space he needs, she walks along the edge of the road, in the gutter, and so the power relations become more obviously weighted in his favour: physically because he is significantly taller than Leah, but also because, in the ensuing dialogue, he, like Leah's mother earlier in the film, criticises her for wearing a short skirt: "What you wearing that for? Everybody's fucking staring at you". Although Leah says that he "should be pleased", this brief exchange reveals John's sullen character and an understanding that their relationship provides her with little scope for individuality.

The subsequent walk is captured in a continuous two-shot lasting 26 seconds. John and Leah are seen front-on in mid-shot, during which time John's dominance unfolds. He asks Leah if she has any money for "puff" (cannabis) although she suggest they spend the money on a visit to the cinema. Although Leah suggests

flirtatiously that he will “have to find [the money] first”, John instantly becomes aggressive, stops walking, and grabs her, telling her not to “mess about”. Leah’s expression is anxious at this point, and John’s physical presence has become more threatening. Submitting to his demands, Leah gives him the money, at the same time bemoaning his miserable character.

The walking chronotope in this scene demonstrates significantly the relations between space and power. The two characters walk beside a dual carriageway with Leah and John fixed between the moving traffic on one side and, on the other, a building site from which new dwellings are beginning to emerge. Placed as they are between this economy of movement and capital, John’s request for money serves to point up the link between women, street-walking, and sexual exchange.

Furthermore, Leah’s capitulation to John’s demands, despite her evident frustration at his interest in money and drugs, reinforces the gender inequalities inherent in their relationship. At this point, Leah’s walk has altered in character, direction, and motive: whereas previously it had implied escape and time for herself away from the confines of a threatening domestic space, now she has become part of a patriarchal economy of exchange. Furthermore, she has moved from one threatening encounter to another, via a route that incorporates the shifting landscapes of contemporary Britain. This opening sequence therefore highlights the walking chronotope’s significance in tying together the elements of space, character and theme as well as making prominent the vibrant mobility that informs Arnold’s visual style.

Walking and the Edgeland Aesthetic

The middle section of the film reinforces Arnold’s use of an edgeland aesthetic. John and Leah’s walk along the roadside in the above scene cuts to a four-second long-

shot of four tower blocks viewed as if through a blurry mesh of grass or wispy branches (see figure 6). The foliage, pressed against the camera lens, is barely discernible, providing an example of haptic visuality which, to use Marks' phrase, "refuse[s] visual plenitude" (2000: 177). Through the proximity of the cinematic world, the spectator is therefore positioned behind the foliage and absorbed into the landscape. There is no diegetic motivation for this shot; it does not establish a precise geographical space for the characters. Instead, the image, combined with the ambient sound of the wind and traffic, pauses the action of the film, eliding narrative time between the last scene and the next, thus emphasising the sensory connection to Leah's world.



Figure 6: the haptic image of absorption (*Dog*, Andrea Arnold: 1998).

The edgeland aesthetic continues as John and Leah walk towards a patch of wasteland replete with discarded building materials and household detritus. They proceed from right to left of the frame, negotiating the rubbish as they cross a small lane towards an urban green-site. The dark colours of John's costume bind him symbolically to this site of exclusion, whilst Leah's red coat separates her from the murk. Furthermore, the shot is well-lit, with sunlight radiating from behind clouds set

against a sky alive with shades of blue, creating a visual dissonance that imbues even these drab surroundings with a glimpse of optimism.

In the following sequence, John walks across the fields with Leah behind him. She has now become the follower, and the independence that characterised her first walk has evaporated. The camera is at head height as they proceed, with unkempt hedges reducing the characters' access to physical space. This feeling of confinement is further reinforced first by the distant vertical lines of tower blocks and street-lighting which act as bars on the horizon, and then by a four-second shot of an orange balloon as it struggles to free itself from the tall grass, a recurring image in Arnold's work (see the conclusion to *Fish Tank*, for example) that compounds the uneasy juxtapositions of freedom and entrapment. This sequence of shots provides an example of Arnold's similarity to Keiller's films, with lingering images of nature set against the intrusions of the urban landscape, although here the situation is reversed, with a spontaneous nature resistant to the spread of concrete and glass. As the characters march along a half-beaten track that cuts through a field, the frame is filled with the green and brown hues of the heathland. In the distance, a combination of buildings and woodland line the horizon, and the lowering sky is squeezed into the top of the frame, a curved branch appearing like a hairline in the bottom left-hand corner of the frame, foregrounding once again the texture of the landscape. The diagonal ridges in the field lead the eye towards, not away from, the estate. In this way, their walk appears circuitous and repetitive, a symbol of their inability to escape the limits of their environment.

At this point, three consecutive close-ups of teasels, seed-heads and buddleia punctuate the walk. The dominant colour in each shot is brown, and there is an autumnal feel to the natural imagery. Buddleia in particular is ubiquitous, and the

genus dominates this and later images. Close-ups highlight the coarseness of the plants, and they are a reminder of the characters who inhabit Arnold's films: their natural beauty combining with an impression of familiarity and mundanity which encapsulates the spirit of the edgeland aesthetic. The third image is lit with the natural light of the sun, with green leaves appearing at the top and right of the frame. Disrupting the narrative rhythm, this brief montage lends the sequence an elegiac quality, drawing attention to the physicality of the landscape and the tactility of nature. It also reinforces the significance of the edgeland aesthetic to the walking chronotope. Whilst the characters' walking is structurally important to the narrative, taking them from one location to the next, it also enhances the uneasy and ambiguous relationship between the edgelands and the built environment. The images therefore symbolise the limitations of the characters' lives whilst also encouraging a tactile and sensory engagement with the vitality of the landscape. Like the rest of Arnold's work, these scenes portray the otherness and the complexities of the edgelands as a reflection of modern life.

The vitality, and ambiguity, of edgeland space is explored further in the next scene which is pivotal to the film. John and Leah walk into a small clearing surrounded by a clump of tall buddleia plants in the middle of a wasteland where John immediately expels a group of young boys amidst volleys of abuse from both sides. With its broken television and discarded sofa, the area appears as an incongruous domestic space complete with a tatty rug and the remains of a headboard for a bed. The *mise-en-scène* creates a sense of inversion: the boundaries of exterior and interior space have collapsed, whilst the presence of a stray dog adds an ironic mood of domestic completion to the scene. This domesticity is compounded by the dialogue which centres upon the mundane subjects of work

and money. Leah asks John what he is going to do with his first wages and whether he will take her out for a meal, but John shows little interest in her. This whole exchange replicates the tired ennui of an exhausted relationship, reinforced by Leah's actions as she settles the cushions and watches John as he rolls a joint. When she asks whether it might be better to go back to John's flat, he declares, with some significance, that this is "[his] house, right here". In an instant, John becomes an inhabitant of the edgelands, his den a substitute for conventional life.

For Farley and Roberts, the den is an iconic edgeland presence. They are "places of retreat but also togetherness, a social space that reinforces allegiances and bonds" and as such are adopted by children as imaginative spaces, reflecting the "need to secrete [themselves] in the landscape" (2012: 38 - 42). However, whilst the Farley and Roberts see these places as providing a sense of security, a cosy warm space which offers a haven against "some darkness or threat it needs to keep out" (Farley and Roberts, 2012: 42), they are not exempt from unequal power relationships. Indeed, this is evident in the perpetuation of gender inequalities evident in this scene.

John's eviction of the boys from this contested space also confirms Farley and Roberts' view of dens as feral spaces which "[reinforce] the sense of edgelands being a kind of no-man's land" (2012: 42). This is certainly evident as the scene unfolds with John and Leah engaging in a perfunctory sexual encounter. Whilst John fondles her breasts, Leah plays with an earring, clearly bored and unmoved by his attempts at foreplay. His assertions to the contrary, for example when he says "you're fucking wet", continue to illustrate his over-inflated sense of masculinity, enhanced further by the peremptoriness of his directions to Leah to "lay down", "lift your arse up", and "get your jacket off". Leah's response, although consensual, is

passive. In fact, her pleasure is ultimately stimulated not by John's fumbled attempts at penetration, but by the sight of the stray dog consuming his stash of cannabis resin, her subsequent laughter providing a carnivalesque release to the awkwardness of the scene.

The wasteland den mocks the rhythms and practices of decaying patriarchal male/female relations, an alternative domestic environment that repeats the threat of abuse and control to which Leah is continuously exposed. Furthermore, it is another example of Bakhtin's threshold chronotope, a place on the edge of nature and of domesticity: images of nature resist the built environment whilst the debris of domesticity 'contaminates' the natural space. The presence of domestic objects within wasteland space defamiliarises them and provides a jarring manifestation of the permeability of boundaries. It also suggests an articulation of urban anxiety in which the distinctions between civilized interior and uncivilized external spaces is not merely subverted but eliminated. Indeed, this erosion of psycho-social boundaries is reinforced at the end of the film when Leah responds to being attacked by her mother by barking like a dog, signifying a breakdown in human communication. The thresholds between the feral edgelands and safe domesticity are thus no longer applicable.

In his study of space, Gaston Bachelard (1958) writes of the dialectics of inside and outside where interior space is aligned with security and warmth and being outside is to be exposed to the elements. Yet Bachelard's idyllic notions of domesticity are undermined in Arnold's film. These thresholds are porous: in Leah's world, where sex is another element within the edgeland aesthetic, Arnold takes away the veneer of walls and houses and displays the social practices of a world that Leah will potentially inhabit.

Walking and threshold chronotopes thus combine to produce a powerful structural moment in the narrative, with John's brutal killing of the stray dog, with which Leah has already been identified earlier in the film, confirming to Leah the reality of her own paralysis, and indicating a future world of domestic violence and abuse. Excluding any hope of domestic safety, let alone bliss, Arnold's film breaks down the very screens which hide domestic terror.

Shocked, disgusted, and finally aware of John's brutality, Leah runs away, her flight captured in a long-shot. However, once again, Arnold interrupts the sequence with another unmotivated shot of the edgelands. This time the camera is at ground level, and a low bush, slightly blurred, obscures the foreground. Horizontal layers of space retreat in the frame: the blurred foliage, the brown grass giving way to a sliver of green, the rooftops, and the hills in the distance, before finally the band of grey sky. The closeness of nature to the frame contributes to the sense of absorption once more. Only the flock of birds in the distance have an escape route, but even this is problematised in the composition of the subsequent shot which reveals several magpies hovering behind the branches of a tree as if they too are visually imprisoned within the frame. In the next shot, Arnold cuts once more to Leah walking away from the camera along the open corridor which runs alongside her flat. Verticals dominate the frame, further enhancing the motif of confinement. The final traumatic scene emphasises Leah's confinement and lack of agency. She is met at the door of her flat by her mother who appears initially to be in a more forgiving mood. However, once inside, she attacks Leah furiously and, in the ensuing struggle, Leah's protests metamorphose into feral barks, alarming the mother and prompting a retreat. Distraught, Leah runs upstairs to her bedroom, closes the door and sits down to cry.

Whilst Leah's journey into the edgelands promises escape, it is problematised by a vortex of destructive familial relationships. The conclusion is therefore a telling moment. If, as Mouton argues, the figure of the flâneuse is an agency of transformation (2001: 14), then this scene is illustrative of transformation as a form of defence. The mother's abusive behaviour, mirrored by John, aligns her with the proscriptions of male authority. However, Leah's rejection of her mother illustrates the emergence of a 'power-to' independence that alters the dynamics of a relationship hitherto defined by her mother's attempts at control.

Wasp

Wasp, arguably more than any of Arnold's films, deals directly with issues of social deprivation and its impact upon family. Its narrative of the domestic and romantic tensions faced by a single mother, Zoe (played by Natalie Press), resonates with the perennial arguments about lone parents and their perceived negative impact on social cohesion (see Arai, 2009). The film therefore addresses the socio-political implications of walking as viewed through the body of the disenfranchised, and socially marginalised, single mother. Furthermore, in *Wasp*, the chronotope of walking creates narrative space for familial and social interaction; it connects sites of conflict and of pleasure; and it maps out a topography of everyday space. Finally, the chronotopicity of the image is revealed through the edgeland aesthetic, in particular the depiction of the film's significant thresholds.

The film opens with Zoe and her young children walking across their estate to confront Bullet-Head (Lizzie Colbert), a woman whom Zoe accuses of hitting her eldest daughter, Kelly (Jodie Mitchell). Their altercation turns quickly into a physical fight, with Zoe's slight frame no match for her more imposing foe. Slightly worsted,

the indefatigable Zoe encourages her children to join her in proffering a middle-finger gesture to her bemused opponent. This scene sets the mood and tempo for the film in which Zoe's role is less of a mother and more of an older sister and comrade-in-arms. On her way back from her fight with Bullet-Head, Zoe meets Dave (Danny Dyer), an ex-boyfriend just out of the army. Careful not to reveal that the four children are her own, she agrees to meet Dave in the pub later that day. However, unable to secure child-care, she takes the children with her on the date. Inside the pub, Dave and Zoe catch up on old times, but the scene is interrupted, in farcical style, by Zoe's regular visits to check on her children whom she plies with crisps and soft drinks to assuage their boredom and hunger. Zoe's discomfort is exacerbated by the accusing presence of Bullet-Head whom she fears will inform social services of her neglect. Still unaware of Zoe's maternal responsibilities, Dave initiates sex with her in his car, whilst outside the children pick up a discarded bag of chips and devour its contents. Attracted to the grease on his lips, a wasp crawls into the mouth of baby Kai (Danny Daley), eliciting screams of panic from the children. Alarmed, Zoe rushes from the car and chastises Kelly for her alleged neglect, before removing the wasp, leaving the baby unharmed. The film ends with Dave offering to take the children back home, buying them a bag of chips on the way, and suggesting that he and Zoe talk about her situation.

The vitality of the walking chronotope, and its energising of female agency, is signalled in the opening shots as Zoe, dressed in her nightgown, marches down a staircase, closely followed by her children. Arnold's use of costume is important in this sequence, as it will be in other walking sequences later in the film. The image of working class women appearing in public dressed in night-wear provokes negative responses in some quarters, and is seen as symbolic of a lack of respectability

(Appleford, 2016: 16). In presenting Zoe thus, Arnold asks us to consider walking in its performative role. Ignoring the negative social attitudes to “pyjamas in public”, Zoe’s body, as del Rio observes in relation to the female body as affective-performative force, writes its own meanings and “upsets the balance of power between performer and world, performer and audience” (2008: 5). As Zoe descends the communal staircase leading from her flat, a close-up of her bare feet on the concrete steps invests the cinematic space with a corporeal physicality and immediately signifies direct, tactile contact with the world around her. The omission of an establishing shot and the actor’s movement in the frame foreground the importance of the mobile body whilst the ambient soundtrack draws attention to the physical contact of Zoe’s naked feet on concrete. Finally, hand-held framing leaves little room for Zoe to be an object of a gaze as the camera shifts quickly from feet to face.

The closeness of the camera restricts a wider view of the physical environment, and the *mise-en-scène* captures the repeated tensions between movement and stasis. The proximity of walls, the vertical lines of corners, the closed windows, staircases, handrails, and dustbins, all lend the scene a feeling of enclosure. In one shot, as the youngest daughter, Leanne (Kaitlyn Raynor), leaves the frame, the camera lingers, creating an embodied gaze through a wrought-iron gate into a small, cluttered hallway. However, despite the individual characters being filmed in separate shots, the family is united in its walking urgency as they march along sun-washed pavements. A mid-shot restricts the background to a few parked cars alongside the access road to the flats, and in another shot, one of the children walks alongside a row of uninviting lock-up garages. After 36 seconds of screen

time, a four-second, frontal mid-shot finally captures the family together for the first time with Zoe at the front commanding the screen space.

Even though the *mise-en-scène* emphasises confinement, the energy of the walking chronotope, both spatially within the frame and temporally through the vitality of movement, resists stasis. Zoe's walk is confident: she carries Kai as she strides down the street, her arms swinging vigorously, her daughters in tow. Alternating between front and rear shots, Ryan's camera captures the energy and the rhythms of the walkers. With the camera retreating as she walks towards it, Zoe threatens to burst out of the screen, whilst the shaky hand-held shots from behind the characters which rushes to keep up with the pace absorbs the spectator into the scene. As Arnold confirms, "[m]y idea was that we were in front of [Zoe] as she was running down a flight of steps. ... I said, 'I wanna be on her face as she's running down the steps'... And Robbie [Ryan] went, 'Okay,' and he did it!" (in Tully, 2009). This mobility within the shot creates a haptic "apprehension of space ... [which] occurs through an engagement with touch and movement" (Bruno, 2002: 16). Indeed, just as, for Bruno, early filmmakers positioned the camera on the front of moving cars and trains to create "a spectatorial means of transportation" (2002: 16) and reproduce the thrill of vicarious movement, so Ryan's Steadicam, linked to Zoe's movement, reinforces the spatial connection between spectator and filmic body.¹²

¹² Arnold's use of walking recalls British director Alan Clarke's technique of opening a film with a walking shot (see *Christine*, 1987, and *Road*, 1987). However, Clarke maintains a wide-angle and his framing is characterised by a continuous tracking, whereas Arnold visual style draws the spectator into the physical spaces of their world and thus into a more intimate connection.

The felt intensity in these initial exchanges encourages the spectator to become complicit in the mobility and the dynamic rhythms of movement, but it also disturbs the conventional cinematic grammar: there is no establishing shot, and character motivation is unclear. Instead, by concluding the opening scene with the collective wider shot, Arnold draws attention to the family's coming together, a unity reaffirmed throughout the film.

Walking and Single Mothers

The walking chronotope provides numerous narrative opportunities to exemplify the unity of Zoe's family. After her fight with Bullet-Head, Zoe and the children walk back to her flat, with the mid-shot that captures them together reinforcing this unity. This time, the pace of walking is less hurried, although still purposeful, and the scene helps to develop an understanding of the relationship between Zoe and her children. Their discussion revolves around the children's hunger and Kelly's remark that her mother looks like Victoria Beckham, a claim that embarrassed Zoe during her altercation with Bullet-Head. The camera remains hand-held and switches between mid-shots and low angles of the family, Arnold reinforcing the familial bond through the space and time allowed to each of the characters in the frame. Zoe and her eldest daughter Kelly share the largest proportion (approximately nine seconds); another daughter, Sinead (Molly Griffiths), accounts for about four seconds; and the youngest daughter, Leanne, occupies around five seconds. At all times, the shot is at Zoe's waist level, enabling the camera to frame the children at head height, and promoting a direct contact between child and spectator whilst Zoe's voice in the soundtrack glues the whole together.

For a brief moment, this unity is interrupted by Dave calling out to Zoe from his car. At this point, the camera cuts to a close-up of Zoe turning away as if to conceal her presence, implying her embarrassment at being seen with children who, in her eyes, may place limitations on any relationships she wishes to form. For this reason, she must physically remove herself from her children in order to speak to Dave. When he asks: “what you doing with all them fucking kids?” Zoe’s embarrassment is confirmed in her reply: “they’re me mates; I’m looking after ‘em for her”. The tensions between familial responsibility and personal pleasure are problematised in Zoe’s deception. Indeed, the close-up of Zoe’s toes curling signifies her comprehension of this. But this deception is rooted in social perceptions of young motherhood which, as Anoop Nayak and Mary Jane Kehily write, “can be seen as a particularly feminised route to poverty, with the determining prospect of lack of respectability and pram-pushing chavette status” (2014: 1339).

Agency for single mothers on benefits is therefore a complex matter, and the film’s introduction of a romantic interest complicates Sutherland and Feltey’s (2017) notion of the “power-to” feminist narrative applied to *Wasp*. However, as they observe, such narratives are dominated by middle-class women (Sutherland and Feltey, 2017: 625) who do not experience the economic and thus practical limitations felt by women like Zoe. Instead, the agency of young mothers living in economic deprivation is hindered by what Nayak and Kehily refer to as “signs of social class disgust and signifiers of shame” (2014: 1331). As the writers argue, these young people “attempt to displace such representations by reimagining themselves in alternative ways, for example, as competent carers, friendly folk or active citizens” (Nayak and Kehily, 2014: 1331). Consequently, the excuse that Zoe gives to Dave evidences this masquerade. Although the shimmy in Zoe’s walk as she returns to her

waiting children signifies both pleasure and triumph, social perceptions of young single mothers requires her to adjust her identity. Ultimately, the film's conclusion also challenges assumptions about society's, and in particular men's attitudes towards single motherhood (Teckman, 2004), with Dave's suggestion that he and Zoe talk about the future imbuing his character with some empathy and understanding.¹³

Walking and the Female Body

Following the family's walk home, the film cuts to a montage that provides further information about their confined environment. The first image is a long-shot of the housing estate where they live. At the top of the screen is a band of sky, to the right an electricity pylon, and on the left a wooded area. In the foreground, a pink flower, blurred and indistinct, fills a considerable part of the space. Within the frame, the various components of the edgelands are presented, with the juxtaposition of the built environment and nature implying the easy relationship between the two.

Furthermore, the proximity of the wildlife to the film screen reflects Marks' idea of the haptic image as a grazing of the surface (2000: 163). In this case, the image of the foliage is almost indiscernible, caressing the film's surface, as noted in the images of nature in *Dog*, above.

¹³ As Julie Teckman points out: "single mothers are represented as licentious, greedy and stupid - simple unambiguous traits that emanate from character faults - reducing the need to evaluate effects of poverty, divorce, isolation and sexual inequalities that continue to allow young men to avoid their responsibilities" (2004: 72-73).

Subsequent shots reinforce the sense of community on the estate: a family walk together away from the camera; two women sit on a balcony and look out across the street, a blade of grass oscillating in the close foreground, again emphasising the co-existence of nature and people. In the long-shot that follows, a row of washing hangs across a line; in the next, another long-shot reveals a dog sitting on a balcony, basking in the sun, before the final close-up of a wasp against a windowpane. Taken together, this series of images draws the spectator into the world of Zoe and her children. However, it would be simplistic to say that Arnold poeticises this world. Whilst Arnold's luring of the audience into the layers of Zoe's world highlights the presence of community and nature, the images do not glamorise. In fact, the montage reduces the size of the cinematic world: from the wider shot of the landscape down to a single wasp trapped inside a room, implying a progressive sense of confinement, acknowledging also the social and economic constraints that prevent people like Zoe from fulfilling their potential.

The scenes in Zoe's flat create a claustrophobic mood, replacing the mobility and freedom of the walking sequence with cramped, cluttered interiors that separate the individual family members into their own tightly framed shots. The shot of the wasp on the windowpane, trapped inside the house, encapsulates the sense of confinement, whilst cutaways to a picture of David Beckham, children's drawings of butterflies, and a sticker which laments that Barbie is a "bitch" who "has everything" point up the fantasy of escape that permeates the family's existence. The presence of these other small lives provides a symbol of the limitations placed upon natural freedoms, and is a motif that appears on numerous occasions in Arnold's work.

The family's poverty is underscored by the close-up of the mouldy bread that Zoe takes from the cupboard, the fact that she feeds her children sugar in place of

sweets, and her scraping together of some loose change to fund a possible evening out. There is a sense of desperation to it all. Only the wasp, freed from the house by Zoe who opens a window to let it escape, proffers any positive symbolism. In this sequence, Arnold once more draws attention to threshold chronotopes. The window that opens up on freedom for the insect provides an observation point from which Zoe can see the block of flats, the factories and the busy roads, all marking out the parameters of her own existence.

The walking chronotope's structural significance is again highlighted in the next walking scene. The position of the sequence, immediately following the images of domestic paralysis, is also a narrative threshold which connects the confining space of the flat, the unity of walking, and the pub which provides Zoe with temporary relief from her responsibilities. The montage in this extended walking begins with a series of shots which fragment Zoe's body. First, a six-second mid-shot opens on the lower half of Zoe's bare legs before tilting up to her hips and buttocks, revealing a micro-denim skirt which barely covers her underwear. The camera's gaze might be seen to fetishise Zoe's body, a notion reinforced in the next shot which, for two seconds, follows her from behind with a close-up of her head and shoulders. She is dressed in a red halter-top, and her hair is tied up in a high pony-tail to reveal large, hooped ear-rings. Zoe's dress code, it could be argued, signifies her as a typical 'Chav' mum. Indeed, as Imogen Tyler observes, the young single mother, is derisively referred to as "Pramface [whose] hoop earrings, sports clothes, pony tail ("Croydon facelift") and gaggle of mixed-race children, is the quintessential sexually excessive, single mother: an immoral, filthy, ignorant, vulgar, tasteless, working-class whore (2008: 26).

However, these impressions are contradicted by the subsequent interactions between Zoe and her children, as well as a reading of Zoe's 'performance' which rejects a Mulveyan reading of Zoe's body as objectified and instead celebrates the performative power of the mobile body (del Rio, 2008). Indeed, as Jacobs contends, Arnold's depiction of the female form "avoids any voyeuristic, objectifying, judging, surveying or superior gaze" (2016: 173). Zoe's gait appears awkward suggesting she has fallen out of the habit of wearing 'going-out' clothes; her pale, slight frame suggests more her immaturity and girlishness rather than a mature feminine sexuality.¹⁴ In addition, although the next shot is another close-up of her short skirt and bare thighs, she is also pushing Kai's pram. The subsequent wide shot contextualises the scene further with Zoe pushing the buggy flanked by her three daughters, with Leanne imitating her mother by pushing a toy buggy. Zoe's immaturity is reinforced in the conversation she has with her daughters. When asked by her eldest child, Kelly, if she is "going to meet Dave", Zoe leans in and employs a girlish, almost mock-conspiratorial tone to reply: "Yeah, but it's a secret".

The final 27 seconds of this sequence begins with a full shot of Zoe holding her daughter's hand, sharing jokes, reinforcing her expectations of their behaviour. She even initiates a play-race crying out, "last one to the bottom of the hill is a plonker!" Throughout this journey, the family is kept in the centre of the frame. However, instead of following them, the camera stays back, and the audience is temporarily separated from the family as they zig-zag down the hill. Spatial elements of the walking chronotope are important at this point. The path stretches off into the

¹⁴ As Sophie Hall suggests, "Zoe isn't a grown woman, she's a teenager stuck in the body of one" (2016: n.p.).

distance, and whilst there is an impression of confinement provided by the verticals of green lamp posts and the diagonals of the paths, the image succeeds in emphasising space and freedom. This is achieved through the grassy verges, rows of trees in full leaf, and the wide pathways that invite the family and the spectator's gaze out towards a wooded vista at the top of the frame. Furthermore, the shot is well-lit, with the vibrant greens of the trees giving the image life and colour (see figure 7), whilst an electricity pylon on the horizon, positioned amongst a clump of trees, is a reminder of the ever-present edgeland aesthetic. The energy of the chronotope is further exemplified in the final shot of this sequence as the camera position shifts from one of distance to one of complete immersion in the physical spaces of the characters. A close-up of Leanne's doll cuts to the buggy's wheels as it is lifted over a step, just as her knee enters the frame. The kinetic energy here reinforces an experiential mode of viewing, whilst the proximity of the characters' bodies emphasises the familial bond, a connection reinforced as they sing songs together.

Arnold's depiction of Zoe's body is therefore one of performative force to challenge the assumptions about the objectification of women. It also questions



Figure 7: The road away from the estate (*Wasp*, Andrea Arnold: 2003).

social and cultural attitudes towards single mothers and their families. Although the character's elation at going on a date is accompanied by a temporary re-awakening of romantic and sexual desire, it is also combined with the joyful antics she has with her children, which, for a time, undermines the idea that walking for single mothers is "a difficult option when having young children in tow" (Titheridge, 2014: 16).

Walking and Threshold Chronotopes

The chronotope is exemplified by reading the narrative functionality of walking alongside a spatial interpretation of the frame's visual elements, and this is evidenced in the next sequence as Zoe and her family continue their walk to the pub and cross a footbridge over a busy dual carriageway. The camera tracks Leanne in a seven-second extreme close-up, framed against the bridge's railings. Whilst these railings provide a safety barrier, the amplified sounds of the traffic rushing by is also a reminder of the fragility of these threshold sites. The bridge is then depicted in a long-shot taken from a position on the hard shoulder of the motorway, and is the first time in the film that Arnold has created a cinematic space between the spectator and Zoe. This shot, obscured by a clump of tall weeds, is held for almost seven seconds, absorbs the spectator into the screen space (see figure 8), and provides an important moment to consider the relationship between the physicality of walking across the bridge with the rush of automobility beneath it. The spatial organisation of the frame invites the discovery of "a multiplicity of stories" (Massey, 2010: 22), not least the difference between the restrictions of Zoe's situation and the speed of movement in the cars below.



Figure 8: the bridge (*Wasp*, Andrea Arnold: 2003).

In this image, walking and threshold chronotopes combine. Narratively, the bridge acts as a gateway for Zoe, opening up a potential, if temporary, means of escape from the drudgery of her life. The traffic below, its busyness emphasised by the ambient soundtrack, is perhaps a symbol of a world beyond Zoe's grasp: one of car ownership and a mobility that is denied to her. However, in another sense, the shot depicts another form of disconnection, with each driver and passenger isolated from others in the frame, in contrast to the bonds formed by the walking scenes just witnessed. The distance between Zoe and the audience, created both by the long-shot and the isolation of mechanical mobility, is therefore a reminder of the importance of the physicality of walking along with its ability to foster social and familial cohesion.

In a few seconds of film time, the image of the family crossing the bridge juxtaposes the dispossessed against a parade of automobiles. Furthermore, the presence of the grass and weeds lining the hard shoulder and central reservation,

that which Edward Chell refers to as “the soft estate” (2012),¹⁵ foregrounds that other aspect of the walking chronotope which is the juxtaposition of the natural world and the built environment. Often ignored, the soft estate becomes a symbol of resurgent, and perhaps even insurgent, nature, that is rebellious in refusing to submit to human boundaries, and “offer[ing] a genuine refuge for wildlife and a metaphorical wilderness in the midst of intense urbanisation” (Chell 2012: n.p.). The depth of this image’s signification lends itself the qualities of the Deleuzian time-image and illustrates diverging, although not mutually exclusive, narratives within the single frame. Through this image, the spectator is encouraged to draw parallels with Zoe and the emergent wildlife that lines the motorway. There is fragility to both Zoe and the soft estate, but there is also an endurance and determination to survive against the free flow of traffic and the world around them. Indeed, as if to underscore the parallels between Zoe and the rebellious spirit of edgeland space, the walk across the bridge is followed by a five-second shot of a ladybird clinging to a blade of grass. Once again, Arnold proffers symbols from the natural world as potential codes to unlock meaning, inviting the contemplation of nature even in the midst of a polluting modernity.

Walking and Economic Deprivation

On first impressions, *Wasp* continues the negative representation of single parenting so explicitly illustrated in *Dog*. Zoe feeds her children sugar, encourages them to use obscene gestures in public, and thinks nothing of displaying aggressive behaviour in

¹⁵ The phrase is “used by Highways Agency to describe the grass verges and other natural habitats that line our motorways” (Chell, 2012: n.p.).

their presence. In addition, Zoe's neglect of her children outside the pub is admonished by Bullet-Head who threatens to involve social services, a reflection of moralising right-wing discourses condemning single mothers who leave their children alone in the pursuit of hedonistic pleasure (Murray, 2008). However, whilst Zoe is labelled as a bad mother by Bullet-Head, the connection between lone-parenting and dissolute behaviour is far from clear-cut. In one review, Redway argues that

Wasp doesn't demonise single parents or the working class ... far from it. Whilst Zoe initially appears to neglect her children, her desire to do whatever it takes to strengthen her family unit is slowly revealed ... [and that] the film channels its British social realist roots to challenge the kinds of lazy and damaging stereotypes of the working classes which are so rife in the right-wing press. (2014: n.p.)

There is unity between Zoe and her children, and as much as Bullet-Head rails against Zoe's perceived maternal ineptitude, the evidence in *Wasp* suggests that Zoe is far from an uncaring mother who leaves her children at home and alone. Once inside the pub, for example, she sends back her own drink to ensure that the children get a Pepsi and a bag of crisps. In addition, she regularly checks on her children's well-being, at the risk of her masquerade being discovered. Zoe's neglect is not due to a lack of care: instead, it is forced through poverty as well as a desperate need to establish a personal sense of well-being, and to extract some pleasure from a life burdened with the restrictions of single motherhood. Whilst Zoe's behaviour might be seen as immature and irresponsible, it is checked by the recognition that she is also an individual with needs of her own, needs that, rightly or wrongly, she prioritises, even if temporarily, over her maternal responsibilities.¹⁶

¹⁶ Much of this representation of lone mothers derives from Arnold's own background. In an interview, with *The Scotsman*, she states that "My mum had four

The vitality and cohesion provided by walking contributes significantly to this alternative interpretation of Zoe's character. The social housing estates in which they live are characterized by high-rise blocks of flats which Cumming describes as being "deemed unaesthetic ... undesirable social elements on the borders of the cosmopolitan city' (2013: 335). Forced to walk through such spaces, women like Zoe are unable to distance their economic and social immobility from their physical immobility. In addition, walking is a chore which often involves the martialling of the whole family in order to get anywhere, an inconvenience portrayed with some precision in *Wasp*. However, despite these negative connotations, in *Wasp* the act of walking becomes a vital symbol of Zoe's desire to escape the mundane experiences which threaten to overwhelm her existence. The chronotope of walking thus subverts traditional interpretations of the role of the single mother, foregrounding positive familial relationships, and providing Zoe with a means of breaking up the monotonous rhythms of life as a lone parent.

To sum up, in the films examined in this chapter the walking and threshold chronotopes combine at structurally and symbolically significant stages of the narrative. Once crossed, these thresholds enable women such as Hetty and Zoe to escape the restrictions of trauma and the pressures of everyday life. Furthermore, these journeys re-present the tactile and sensory uniqueness of everyday

kids when she was very young and was a single mum, so she is similar to the film's main character in *Wasp* ... Now that I am a mother myself, I can appreciate how tough that must have been, but people think of council estates as gritty, horrible places. I wanted my film to show how colourful and vibrant life can be there" (Arnold in Anon., 2009a: n.p.).

landscapes as sites of affirmation and resistance. In the next chapter, these ideas combine in the discussion of *Red Road* where the contrast between the virtual flânerie of a surveillance operator and her encounters with the physical world creates a threshold that enables the confrontation of past trauma.

Chapter Three: Crossing Thresholds, Mapping Space in *Red Road* (2006)

The previous chapter demonstrated how the walking chronotope can be used to examine female agency in Arnold's "power-to" narratives, whilst the edgeland aesthetic as a form of re-presenting the landscape is imbued with significance by close analysis of the temporal and spatial vectors of the cinematic frame. Even in these shorter films, the importance of the haptic flâneuse is evident in the emphasis on embodied mobility, whether it is in the frantic movements of Zoe, the reflective wandering of Hetty, or the edgeland tactility of Leah. In this chapter, I turn to examine *Red Road*, Arnold's first full-length feature film, from a de Certeauan position. I consider the chronotope's shift from optic to haptic flânerie, with the character of Jackie embodying the investigative, exploratory flâneur described by Nuvolati (2014). In addition, walking and threshold chronotopes combine to precipitate a process of healing in response to both trauma and a sense of urban alienation.

Set in Glasgow amongst the titular high-rise flats, *Red Road* is a ghost story: not in the traditional sense of the genre, but one that is, nevertheless, replete with spectral presences. It is also a narrative of psychological and geographical thresholds. *Red Road*'s protagonist, Jackie, inhabits social and occupational margins: firstly, she is estranged from her dead husband's parents, and secondly, her job as a surveillance camera operator is executed from the panopticon that is the headquarters of CityEye Security. Living vicariously through the subjects she watches on screen, Jackie takes voyeuristic pleasure in the extracts of life that she observes repeatedly night after night. Examples of these are a female cleaner dancing to music on her personal device whilst working the late shift in an office

block, and a man whose concern for his ailing dog elicits Jackie's sympathy. Arnold withholds the details of Jackie's past, and we learn only later about the accident that killed her husband and daughter. She lives alone, although a wedding-ring implies a past relationship, and an invitation to a wedding precipitates an uncomfortable reconciliation with what turns out to be her dead husband's family.

The concealment of the source of Jackie's alienation shifts the film away from melodrama to a narrative of psycho-sexual desire which foregrounds her pursuit of the on-parole Clyde Henderson (Tony Curran), whom we later learn is the man responsible for her family's death. On the surface, Clyde's feral nature is at one with the derelict and decaying spaces that constitute the Red Road estate, along with its edgelands of litter-strewn underpasses and patches of unkempt greenery. From the moment Jackie sees him, on camera, having sex with an unknown woman behind a garage in the dead of night, she becomes obsessed with pursuing his every movement via the bank of monitors in front of her. However, the narrative structure is carefully designed to conceal Jackie's motives from the audience. She follows Clyde through the Red Road estate and gains his acquaintance by gate-crashing a party at his flat, only to flee in self-loathing after an intimate dance with him. Returning to the flat the day after, Jackie meets Clyde's friends Stevie (Martin Compston) and April (Natalie Press). Realising that Stevie has stolen her purse, she decides to return to the estate where a meeting with Clyde results in their having sex in his flat. Without giving explanation, Jackie stages a rape for which Clyde is arrested. However, in the denouement, she drops the charges, before confronting Clyde with the real reasons for her subterfuge. Hearing his confession, she is able finally to achieve catharsis, and the film ends with a reunion with her husband's parents.

Jackie as Virtual Flâneuse

The opening sequence demonstrate many aspects of the walking and threshold chronotopes. Jackie's cutting between images on the CCTV monitors creates temporal and spatial juxtapositions that focus attention on physical movement and its impact upon space and bodies. In addition, Jackie's virtual flânerie, whilst organised around her optic gaze onto the CCTV screens, is replete with haptic imagery. Indeed, Marks states that the "opening-credit sequences of many movies take place over haptic images" (2000: 177), and this is evident in the opening scene of *Red Road*.

The film begins with a virtual exploration of the urban landscape rather than a physical one, as Jackie negotiates her way through a series of locations via the manual controls of the CCTV monitors. Haptic visuality is established immediately: a black screen gives way to a slow pan and tilt across blurred shapes which can eventually be discerned as out-of-focus TV screens. Accompanied by a discordant non-diegetic soundtrack of voices filtered electronically, it is as if the cinematic world is coming into being. Monitors crackle and distort, and another series of images appear for fleeting moments on screen before collapsing into a black void. The electronic sounds combine with this metaphorical birthing of the image to create an impression of interiority, as if the spectator is being invited into the body of the film itself. And yet, in a film about surveillance, this "baffled vision" (Marks, 2000: 181), ironically, denies the audience clarity, and these opening frames create a visual dissonance which is at odds with the mainly conventional cinematic language employed throughout the rest of the film, that is, until its final scene when Jackie moves into the very screens that she had previously watched over.

The opening titles cut to a wide shot depicting a bank of over forty TV monitors, still out of focus, whilst in the foreground at the bottom of the screen, a pair of hands rub together. The soundtrack emphasises the sensation of skin on skin, a tactile counterpoint to the visual overload present in the monitors, reinforcing the primacy of physical contact against the digitalised world from which it is separated. A close-up frames Jackie's face in profile as she looks screen right, her eye, nose, and upper cheek emerging from the blackness that surrounds it. Jackie's body is already fragmented, but the edit links the physical body (her hands) to the visual and olfactory senses, signifying the connection between haptic stimuli and the observable environment.

As if to emphasise this, an eye-line match cuts to a series of distorted CCTV images of the night-time streets, all of which emphasise the primacy of walking: pedestrians traverse pavements glistening with rain, crossing from right to left in one shot and then, in the next, a woman hurries towards the camera, diagonally across the screen and against the grain of the crowd. Next, a man steps onto a bus and pays his fare before becoming obscured by passing traffic. A fourth shot depicts another crowd of pedestrians moving away from the camera. This montage cuts to Jackie's profile from a different angle, but now it is a fuller shot of her head and shoulders, her body turning slightly as she follows the movement on the screen, continuing to rub her hands in the darkened room. The film's foregrounding of the tactile senses continues with Jackie's physical manipulation of the joystick, which, because each movement controls the images on screen, also encapsulates the relationship between touch and vision (Lake, 2010). These edits foreground the sensation of physical contact as an antidote to the virtual world in front of her, and enable a haptic connection between spectator and screen.



Figure 9: visual excess (*Red Road*, Andrea Arnold: 2006).

In the next CCTV image, a young woman walks towards the camera along the middle of the frame, sharing the pavement with a couple who cross the screen horizontally left to right, whilst an older man kicks aside a scrap of paper. A close-up of Jackie suggests that her interest is piqued, as if in recognition of the woman. Another edit shows Jackie's hand in close-up as she presses a number of keys to operate the camera system, the electronic beeps of the machine breaking the near silence of the diegetic world. At this point, the opening frames which earlier refused "visual plenitude" (Marks, 2000: 177) now give way to visual excess (see figure 9) as we see Jackie, seated with her back to the camera, in front of a bank of over 30 monitors. Behind them, a dusky glow emerges, imbuing the image with an ethereal quality. This visual plenitude is compounded by an image of the female pedestrian that is replicated on two monitors on either side of Jackie, as well as on a screen above her right shoulder, thus multiplying the gaze at the woman's body who remains an object not just for her fictional observer, but for the watching audience.

The subsequent edit shows an image of the CCTV screen on which can be seen, in a close mid-shot, the same woman. A further series of alternate cuts from

close-ups of Jackie to the woman on the screen suggest that she has some narrative significance, and the shots of Jackie's reaction confirm a familiarity. Jackie cuts away to another CCTV image, this time of the exterior of a shoe shop. As a man emerges, pulling on a lead to encourage his ailing dog to go for a walk, Jackie zooms in, again as if both interested and familiar with the character. Her empathic response is signified as she follows the man on camera. Two mid-shots show the man as he walks his dog towards a pedestrian crossing where he meets another dog walker. They are joined subsequently by a third person, and together they cross the road. Once again, as with the woman previously, Jackie appears to recognise the man, as if she has encountered him before on her virtual journey through the city streets.

These opening images are ambiguous in their depiction of walking. In one way, they celebrate its vitality, its purposefulness, and its function as a method of social cohesion and functionality. However, they also position Jackie as a virtual flâneur whose televisual voyaging endows her with authority and control over the visual narrative that she creates for the film's audience. Her position in the CityEye control room has been likened to that of an eyrie (Mullen, 2006; Stewart 2012), and her gaze construed as a masculine, optic one (Tulloch and Middleweek, 2017: 295). Indeed, these signifiers of a male gaze are reinforced by the androgyny of her appearance: physically, in the angularity of her facial features, but also in the formality of her CityEye uniform with its pale blue shirt that lends her an aura of officialdom, enhanced by the dark tie (Lawrence, 2016: 562). The image-fragments of the opening sequence therefore marry the haptic and optic worlds, both of which co-exist in Jackie's persona. Whilst her gaze is active and enquiring, and she possesses decisive control over the images, her familiarity with the routines and movements of the individuals also suggests that these people are virtual

acquaintances whom she frequents on occasions, blurring the distinction between the optic gaze of surveillance and that of an empathic haptic one. This scene, therefore, emphasises the role that optic visuality plays in ocularcentric theories of film spectatorship, with the people on the screen a source of visual pleasure for Jackie, who can be positioned as *flâneur*, rather than *flâneuse*. Therefore, at this moment in time, she does not consider the agency of her visual objects, nor in fact, their right not to be looked at. She creates instead a narrative from fragments, and only later does she piece these together to arrive at a fuller picture.

Jackie's virtual *flânerie* is investigative, a role reinforced by her position of pseudo-authority. Like the detective (or perhaps the private eye), her exploration of the world through the camera lens is labyrinthine as she doubles back and forth between images, zooming and re-framing to enhance her perspective. Through the CCTV monitors, Jackie navigates and maps the spaces of the city, and by switching between locations she attempts to assemble the disparate narratives to find meaning amongst the fragments, a task, indeed, awaiting Arnold's actual audience. The subsequent stories are compiled and archived in the rows of video cassettes which she files away in the storage cupboards, dated, categorized, and stamped.

The story Jackie attempts to construct is, however, structurally flawed. Several narrative elements fall through the cracks between the observer and the observed, and her mapping of the city is unreliable because of the human agency that interferes with interpretations of the images in front of her. Whilst she controls the gaze for herself, she has little control or influence over the actions of those she observes, and despite her skilled manipulation of the cameras, there remain blind spots and unmappable zones. In a later scene, for example, because of her fixation on Clyde, Jackie misses some important footage showing the stabbing of a teenage

girl. Furthermore, she makes false assumptions about Clyde's motives for visiting a schoolgirl whom we later discover to be his daughter. The narrative she assembles is unreliable because she cannot penetrate its interior spaces. Hers is the role of cinematographer shooting a film for which there is no script, only improvisation. She is therefore compelled to resort to physical intervention to complete the gaps, and it is through walking that she succeeds.

In the search for narrative integrity, the walking chronotope resembles the creative act: just as de Certeau identifies pedestrians with makers of meaning (1988), so Jackie re-writes the city spaces, her physical walks acting as a second draft to the incomplete text she has already begun to compose. Thus, many of Jackie's journeys follow paths already marked out by her prior virtual mapping, for example, the shop window frequented by the dog-walking man and the Red Road flats. Jackie therefore exists in an uncanny world of doubles with each of the spectral images on the screen a grainy reflection of an external reality.

The film thus sees Jackie conform to de Certeau's model of the observer. For him, the totalising celestial eye is "theoretical" and thus unsatisfactory unless it is combined with a physical engagement with the spaces of the observed (1988: 92-93). Jackie must, as de Certeau puts it, "disentangle [herself] from the murky intertwining daily behaviours and make himself alien to them (de Certeau, 1988: 92-93). Consequently, her eventual entrance into the physical spaces of the film collapses the interface between the haptic and optic worlds, and between the surveiller and the surveyed so that she engages in, as Patricia Pisters observes, a "haptic kind of voyeurism" (2014: 3). Jackie's ultimate immersion into physical space thus transforms the static and optic look of the voyeur to that of the sub-veiller whose look "works to collapse distance ... [and acts] as a corporeal, haptic close experience

of inhabiting spaces and transgressing boundaries” (Lake, 2010: 236-237).¹⁷ This interface between monitor and reality functions effectively as a threshold chronotope which is crossed when Jackie, through walking, transforms her virtual investigations into physical ones.

Walking and the Threshold Chronotope

The threshold chronotope is a catalyst for the walking journeys that take place. In the film. Whether they are architectural, geographical, physical or psychological, Jackie’s world is comprised of, and defined by, thresholds which work chronotopically to tie together “the knots” of the narrative (Bakhtin, 1988: 84).

Bakhtin makes explicit the association between the chronotope of the threshold and trauma. He sees thresholds as intrinsically bound up with “the breaking point of a life, the moment of crisis, the decision that changes a life (or the indecisiveness that fails to change a life, the fear to step over the threshold)” (1988: 248). The screens, frames and windows visible in the film’s *mise-en-scène* not only imply Jackie’s confinement but also represent a state of mind and body which, for her, manifests itself in the inability to build a present from the remnants of the past. The threshold chronotope of the CCTV screens also performs a narrative function

¹⁷The dual modality of Jackie’s gaze is what Lake describes as an example of sub-veillance which is “a way of inhabiting spaces, rather than merely a practice of looking” (2010: 238). Sub-veillance “[rejects] the traditional conceptual coupling of surveillance and male voyeurism”. Instead, the observer looks “from below” and thereby “revers[es] the traditional power dynamics of looking” (Lake, 2010: 232).

important to this study: her sighting of Clyde instigates the walking journeys through which Jackie begins the process of catharsis.

As mentioned, the CCTV screens act as thresholds. In the CityEye scenes, Jackie's separation from the world is doubled. She is repeatedly shown with her back to the camera and facing the wall of monitors, thus she is obscured both from the spectator and the objects of her own gaze.¹⁸ These screens also provide a precise visual example of the threshold chronotope, depicting "everyday and biographical sequences" (Bakhtin, 1988: 247) of the world as they unfold on the screen. The multiple spaces that Jackie observes co-exist within a single time frame, or else, in the process of rewinding and forwarding, within several time frames. Furthermore, the monitors form an interface between two spatial and temporal states: Jackie's world within the non-space of the CityEye buildings versus the simulacrum of reality depicted on the screens.

It is noticeable how, whilst the CCTV screens provide Jackie with some pleasure and excitement, other screen-thresholds in the film are symbols of confinement and stasis. The motif of windows indicates Jackie's position as an observer but also reminds us of her entrapment behind both physical and emotional screens. In this case, Jackie's window on to the world, whether it is the bank of screens or the windows and mirrors through which she gazes, offer that which Pidduck calls the "yearned for if not realised" subjectivity (1998: 27). However, although comparisons can be drawn between the yearning potential of costume

¹⁸ Elsewhere in the film, other forms of monitors become noticeable. For example, when she gets home, Jackie immediately switches on the TV, as if she is habitually programmed to look at a screen.

drama protagonists and Jackie, there the similarity ends: in *Red Road*, the gaze is directed not towards manicured lawns or the mannered play of the middle classes, but upon the everyday and the mundane, a simulacrum of reality that speaks of the alienation of her life.

Windows thus dominate Jackie's experience of the world, not only those signified by the CCTV monitors, but others such as those belonging to the Red Road flats, providing a view across the Glaswegian landscape that emulates Jackie's CCTV perspective. This is especially evident in the scene when Jackie visits Clyde's flat to apologise for running out on him at the previous night's party. Clyde's friend Stevie (Martin Compston) directs Jackie's attention to the view across Glasgow afforded by the flat's high-rise prospect. Whereas Jackie's previous observations of the city have been through a digital medium, here the look is real and physical, even if it retains the same optic distance. As she looks through the window at the other Red Road flats, Jackie's back is to the camera, reminiscent of the framing in the *CityEye* scenes, and the flats are captured in Jackie's eyeline as if viewed through a CCTV screen. Her comment to Stevie that it is "some view" is also a reminder of the statement made by Avery (Jackie's married lover, played by Paul Higgins) when he sees the CCTV control deck: "you see it all here". However, in this state of real-world surveillance, Jackie is unable to zoom in on the lives of others, but her lean forward into the space of the window is a gesture compelled by her habitual inquisitiveness. She looks down on the ground and an eyeline match reveals lush green grass contrasting with the shadows and the burnt orange brick of the flats. The fact that it is Stevie who invites her to "feel the wind" suggests that her experience of the landscape is limited to an optic gaze that negates sensory participation, and when he opens the window, Jackie feels the rush of air, gasping audibly, and steps back from

the vertiginous height. The tantalising proximity of release is conveyed through the amplified sound of the wind. However, Stevie's cruel, pretence at hurling his girlfriend April (Natalie Press) through the window is a reminder of the vulnerability of thresholds, how easily they can be crossed, and the dangers such crossings can offer, and the camera's oscillations replicate April's, Jackie's, and the audience's alarm.

The proliferation of the threshold chronotope codifies Jackie's world as an abject, traumatic heterotopia. As Stewart states, she "exists in a void" and is "stranded in the liminal" (2012: 551). If the abject is, according to Xiaofan Amy Li, "the uncanny existence of incongruous things" (2015: 2), then the images on the CCTV screen, acting as a virtual world, juxtapose individual spaces in a fragmented way. They are images of separation, denied a totalising perspective: a fragmented grammar of looking that is absent of connections, and an asyndetic collage of space.

The heterotopia as an element of the threshold chronotope is particularly evident in the presentation of cars which transport characters across spatial, temporal, and narrative borders. In *Milk*, the car functions as both a threshold and a heterotopic space. In the car, Hetty is able to distance herself from the trauma of her miscarriage whilst, cinematically, the images of freedom and sensory delight contrast with the restrictions of domesticity. For Jackie, whilst the car continues to function heterotopically, it is anything but a symbol of freedom.

The cinematography in this sequence is dominated by images of confinement, and the camera rarely, if ever, shows the characters from the front. Her journey to the countryside with Avery is filmed from inside the back of the car, with the audience effectively watching and listening to the dialogue through the metal grill that divides the space at the rear of the van from the driving cockpit. A montage of three

separate shots of the wintry landscape, the blue sky barely visible against silhouettes of denuded trees, enhances the scene's atmosphere of unforgiving isolation. Unlike the images on the CCTV monitors, many of these shots are cutaways, unmatched to Jackie's eyeline and thus emphasise her separation from the environment. These images of an external landscape are supplemented by internal symbols of confinement. For example, a cut to a shot of a barred window that looks out onto moorland, then an electricity pylon visible on the horizon, gives way to a wide shot of Avery and Jackie as they sit in a pub. They do not talk, and Avery finishes off a bag of crisps whilst Jackie looks into space, her profile reflected within a frame on the wall behind her which acts as another reminder of her confinement.

The sequence and grammar of the editing juxtaposes mobility with entrapment and underscores these important thematic concerns of the film. Furthermore, the road they travel on is one that leads only to a destination of tired repetition. The joyless scene in the pub is followed by a long-shot of Avery's van parked on a wind-swept grassy hill overlooking the city, the emptiness of the scene relieved only by his dog as it forages in the foreground. Two thirds of the way down the frame, the lilac shades of the sky at the top of the screen give way to the darker clouds gathering on the horizon. Whilst the image provides a sense of open space, any implication of freedom is diminished by the increasing feeling of gloom and entrapment by the clouds as they dwarf the tiny van, emphasising instead its isolation (see figure 10).

Inside the van, sex between Jackie and Avery is perfunctory and cold, filmed in a series of fragmented shots that capture her emotional distance. The establishing shot of the landscape cuts to a close-up of the left-hand side of Jackie's face, pressed up against the passenger door window as she is penetrated by Avery. A

series of cuts to their body parts, followed by another shot of Jackie's head from behind the seat, the front of her face framed in the wing mirror. She is doubly trapped within the shot. After Avery ejaculates, it is he who gets out of the car whilst Jackie remains inside, the camera framing her once more from behind the metal grill, a final underscoring of her emotional paralysis. Once again, the car is a heterotopic space of transgression as well as a masculine site, in which women are invited and where men, in this case Avery's anecdotes about his family, are able to recount their stories.



Figure 10: the diminution of Avery's van (*Red Road*, Andrea Arnold: 2006).

In the next scene, after getting out of Avery's car, Jackie, filmed in long-shot, is alone in the frame with the sun blooming behind her silhouette. Held for almost nine seconds, the image is a signifier of her isolation even though the light behind her might also be a symbol of her release. Avery's car is therefore a temporal and spatial bracketing off of Jackie's world that fulfils functions of the heterotopia and Bakhtin's threshold chronotope. It is temporal because it alters nothing in Jackie's everyday life: the soulless sex, the circular journey of the car, her isolation at the end

all embody her existential stasis; it is spatial because the pub, the car, and the heath perform the role of the deviant heterotopia. Like the motel, these are sites of illicit encounters that exist outside the agreed conventions of normative relations (Foucault, 1986). They provide an illusion of company and yet, in the way that Jackie is encapsulated within the numerous frames in the scene, she is herself partitioned.

Walking and Mapping the Physical World

Walking journeys enable Jackie to fill the gaps in her virtual map, reconstructing geographical space through sensory and tactile physicality. In this way, her flânerie provides space for lived experience, or as Stewart suggests, to leave her “womb-like den” (2017: 558) and cross over into reality. Jackie’s first walking scene occurs a few minutes into the film as she walks home after work. Here, the film language provides a contrast to that of the high-angled separateness of the CCTV cameras. This time the mobile camera provides the embodied urgency familiar in *Wasp* and *Dog*, tracking Jackie from left to right for 13 seconds, whilst realistic lighting and sound contribute to the verisimilitude. The shot is darkened, and Jackie is at first indiscernible: although her head and shoulders are framed in the foreground, the image is blurred, and her head is down as she avoids interaction with the group of young people behind her. The soundtrack also lacks clarity and coherence as the strong Glaswegian accents of the group mingle with passing traffic and the music from the pub. Once the group enter the venue, the image is immediately reframed to a slightly wider shot of Jackie. She is followed along the road by the camera for a few seconds, before cutting to a clearer and cleaner mid-shot of her going into her house. Her isolation is confirmed by the slamming of the door which closes off the sounds of the outside world, if not the muted voices of children from a nearby room.

Narratively, this short sequence encapsulates Jackie's desire for anonymity. Her position in the first shot separates her from the others, whilst the change in focus, from the indistinctness of the street to the more conventional image inside the house, suggests that she is comfortable only when in her own company. Even though walking in the film is characterised by an embodied, sensory aesthetic, Jackie's disconnection renders it a sterile act. During her walks she communicates with no-one. Walking, in Jackie's case, is not a site of social cohesion but alienation. The walking chronotope here thus functions to illustrate Jackie's distance from the world and from reality.

This reluctance or inability to make contact with others is further reinforced in subsequent walking scenes. An excursion out into the night-time streets typifies Arnold's visual style. A low-angle pavement-level shot of two men walking towards the camera cuts to a long-shot of a girl in a phone booth, before framing an old man in mid-shot as he proceeds from right to left of the screen. On the soundtrack, sirens blare, and a subsequent four-second shot of Jackie walking from right to left of the screen cuts first to an onrushing ambulance and then back to a rear-view image of Jackie walking along the pavement. She is in mid-shot and centre-frame again, with the streets beyond a blurred mixture of reds and indigos. As she looks left and right, the absence of cutaways or eyeline matches denies the spectator her point-of view. Slowly, the streets and pedestrians come into focus and, with the camera still behind Jackie, we can see, over her shoulder, the dog-walking man who has stopped to look into a shop window. She faces the man, but this time the virtual distance between the two has transformed to a silent, physical proximity. The shot is held as she walks towards him, slows down, and then turns to stare at the same shop window. However, the two-shot, in profile, maintains Jackie's separateness. She

makes no connection with the man, and instead prefers to look at the rectangular notices. Clearly, Jackie's physical manoeuvring within the real spaces of the city lacks the confidence and dexterity of her virtual *flânerie*.

A vital ingredient missing from the CCTV footage is sound, and these real-world interactions provide this additional sensory richness. Apart from the sirens, Jackie's *flânerie* in this scene is enhanced by her ability to hear the voice of the man as he encourages his dog to walk a little more, whilst a muezzin, anomalous and eerie, further augments the mood. This is what the CCTV footage cannot show: there is a sensory intimacy about this scene, provided by the camera's position at ground level and its depiction of everyday humanity, which captures the raw physicality and the noise of the streets.

That this sequence ends with a cut to a high-angle of a CCTV camera standing separate against the Glaswegian night is a further reminder of the contrast between these scenes and Jackie's virtual experience. Not only does it signify that she too is the object of an anonymous, secretive gaze, but its position in the shot, and in the sequence, encloses Jackie in the virtual world, an enclosure reinforced by the CityEye scene which follows. Whilst these initial walking scenes highlight Jackie's first tentative steps into reality, her gaze at the landscape is only a substitute for the monitors she watches at her place of work. Her sighting of Clyde, however, initiates her slow emergence into the world, but this is not without an element of risk and, as Thornham suggests, Jackie's pursuit of Clyde leads her to "cross the border between safety and potential danger, panoptic observation and corporeal engagement" (2016b: 142).

Jackie's investigations begin 'virtually' on CCTV. Scanning the streets around the Red Road flats, she observes Clyde talking to Stevie and April. At that point

Jackie does not recognise Clyde, and as he follows a young woman behind the Jet garage to have sex, she is clearly fascinated by the drama unfolding before her. The editing of this sequence invites a contrast between Jackie's trailing of Clyde and his own casual encounter. As she follows him on the monitor, a low-angle shot of Jackie at her desk reinforces her sense of supremacy: she leans forward, like a hawk tracking its prey, and zooms in on the image. However, as she realises that the encounter is consensual, Jackie's response changes. She sits back in the chair in a mid-shot accompanied by the film's recurring electronic soundtrack which creates an eerie atmosphere. Clyde slowly removes the woman's underwear whilst she negotiates the condom, and the cut back to Jackie shows her body tighten, and two close-up shots of her hand caressing the joystick, intercut with screen images of the couple's increasing pleasure, reveal her arousal. Jackie's gaze here contains elements of both optic and haptic visibility, with the traditional surveillance mode combined with the embodied and increasingly sensory and physical response she experiences at the sight of Clyde and the woman having sex. However, at this point, whilst the subjects of Jackie's gaze are aware of each other's presence, they remain ignorant of the show they have provided for their observer. In this way, Jackie's actions are morally suspect, and the unsettling score signifies the tensions inherent in this act of voyeurism and surveillance (Pisters, 2014).

Whilst Lake refers to the Red Road site as a "wasteland of poverty" (2010: 236), and Jackie's initial reaction to Clyde's tracking of the woman is to call the police, the cinematic design of this scene subverts these assumptions, in both its *mise-en-scène* and the events that unfold. Although the shot of the couple having sex against a graffitied wall, with the foreground filled with tall grass and weeds, presents a sordid image of casual encounters set within a corresponding site of

neglect, the lighting of the scene illuminates the couple rather than casts them in shadow. This not only provides a theatrical light by which Jackie can satisfy her voyeurism, but also implicates the audience in the scopophilic act. On a narrative level, the scene also provides the catalyst for Jackie to enter Clyde's world and to begin to salve the trauma in her own psyche. Its ambiguity, however, is important. Optic visuality is implicitly connected to a discourse of power, and through her response to Clyde's appearance, Jackie's virtual flânerie also reflects the potential for abuse inherent in the act of surveillance. Furthermore, the rush of action which follows is more akin to a detective narrative, in which Jackie performs the role of investigator, despite there being no clear narrative motive.

Jackie's descent from her optic eyrie to Clyde's underworld transforms her into a haptic flâneuse. From this point, the physical walking chronotope dominates with Jackie adopting all functions of Nuvolati's modern flâneur/flâneuse (2014): collecting physical 'evidence' (the stone she beats herself with after the 'rape'; the jagged implement she picks up to protect herself, or attack Clyde) she is the "explorative-mobile"; in her pursuit of Clyde across the estate, she becomes the shadowing-mobile"; finally, in her static observations of Clyde's encounters with his friends and neighbours, she is the "observative-static" (Nuvolati, 2014: 30).

In the film's longest walking scene, when Jackie first visits the Red Road flats, the walking chronotope is at its most significant, crystallising the narrative, aesthetic, and extra-textual elements into a pursuit that is redolent of the thriller genre, although one that reverses traditional roles of male pursuer/female pursued.¹⁹ In

¹⁹ In fact, Pisters (2014) describes the film as a "neuro-thriller", comparable, in its theme of voyeurism, to *Rear Window* (Hitchcock, 1954).

addition, the structural importance of the chronotope is realised here by the scene's centrality to Jackie's emergence from trauma, whilst her transformation from virtual to haptic flâneuse makes real (to her and to the audience) the characters she has hitherto observed on television screens.

Conventions of the suspense film, such as a perspective restricted to Jackie's viewpoint, the shaky hand-held camera, and a soundtrack of ominous metallic and electronic pulses and low-fi drones, provide an appropriate correlative to her perilous unease, and signal Clyde as a potential threat to her safety. There is a tangible atmosphere of anticipation from the moment Jackie approaches the Red Road estate by bus. Once again, windows-as-screens dominate the frame as she gazes out on to the drab landscape beyond, and the camera's position, occupying as it does a space immediately next to Jackie, invites the spectator into a shared experience. As the bus enters a council estate, the framing follows the bus's trajectory, a movement resembling Jackie's earlier manipulation of the CCTV images, as if, again, she has swapped one set of screens for another. The blurred image of the Red Road flats is then revealed, accompanied by an eerie electronic soundtrack that intensifies the mood of apprehension at Jackie's crossing of this important threshold.

A 17-second mobile sequence follows Jackie from the bus to the Red Road flats. The buildings are revealed slowly, their image sharpening into view as she approaches, and the left-hand tower is positioned at the top of the frame as if refusing to be bound by the limitations of the screen. These compositional restrictions are compounded by the image of a solitary leafless tree that appears trapped between the top of a brick wall and the upper edge of the frame, whilst the numerous angles that criss-cross the screen evoke an off-kilter awkwardness to the

shot. The flats dominate the top half of the image, their roofs out of sight, and Jackie is visibly squeezed into the right-hand side of the frame. With only a small rectilinear patch of grey sky bringing any natural light to the image, the scene has a despondent feel. Despite the proximity of the camera, the spectator is denied a reaction shot from Jackie's perspective, implying that, like her, they are alienated from this space.

Consecutive cutaways to litter-strewn verges, surveillance cameras, graffitied walls, and metallic fencing, along with the cloudy skies and gloomy lighting, create an uneasy mood. Once more, threshold and walking chronotopes combine. Lake's suggestion that "we share [Jackie's] surreal feeling of having entered a previous prohibited terrain" (2010: 236) is apt: the CCTV camera towards which Jackie looks is a reminder of the two worlds she inhabits. Indeed, as we will see later in the film, there is irony in the fact that she has become part of the landscape she is charged with observing. As the camera continues to track Jackie's approach to the flats, she blurs in and out of focus, and a fence of rusted railings sharpen into view, another indicator of entrapment and neglect. Jackie approaches Clyde's van and sees her face reflected in the driver's door window: another frame, another screen. Finally, an over-the-shoulder low-angle shot behind the blurred figure of Jackie shows the flats towering above her.

Jackie's journey has thus taken her from the virtual heights afforded by the views from the CCTV room to the foot of the Red Road towers. She looks up at the buildings, standing now in the same spot towards which she had earlier directed the cameras: once more she has become an object of her own absent gaze. As she looks upward to absorb the scale of the flats, the eye-line match reveals the numerous windows, themselves screens for countless other eyes, reiterating the

theme of surveillance. These monolithic constructions are framed to reflect this sense of awe, and, in one seven-second long shot, Jackie is dwarfed by the buildings as they rise into the sky, their deep-red concrete pillars standing out from the gloom (see figure 11).



Figure 11: the sublime image of the Red Road flats (*Red Road*, Andrea Arnold: 2006).

During Jackie's pursuit of Clyde, the walking chronotope unfolds a topography of edgeland and urban space that is rich with multiplicities of meaning, and the scene contrasts the drabness of the landscape with a sense of community that contradicts conventional responses to these places. At the beginning of the sequence, an over-the-shoulder shot reveals Jackie's view of the layers of landscape, with parked cars and tarmac in the foreground giving way to a patch of wild grass. Beyond this, an underpass in the top-right of the frame draws the spectator's eye towards a road at the top of the screen. Jackie's pursuit takes her towards the underpass, a pathway strewn with litter, with the sound of the ground crunching beneath the walkers' footsteps. A point-of-view shot from Jackie's perspective pans up from Clyde's feet

showing the worn hems of his ill-fitting jeans, to the black bin bag he carries over his shoulders, and as she picks up a shard of glass, a harsh non-diegetic sound evokes an ominous air.

These symbols of the edgelands imply a sense of neglect, and yet, even as the spectator is positioned with Jackie, the visual images, generic tropes, and the walking modalities generate an impression of ambiguity which is coded, as Murray notes, by Jackie's position as "a dark, blurred and heavily cropped shadow that clings to the frame's vertical edges" (2016: 208). Thus, although the narrative structure, and its identification with Jackie, position Clyde as a potential threat, the scene's construction subverts these assumptions. For example, it is she who collects a weapon, despite their being no apparent motive for her caution, and in his loping gait, the casual way he carries the black bin bag, and his lack of awareness of Jackie's pursuit, Clyde's ordinariness appears to pose very little threat.

There is a tactile, sensory quality to this scene which reaffirms the film's haptic aesthetic: for example, the sound match to Jackie picking up the piece of glass evokes an impression of its sharpness, whilst the shifting focal depths of close-ups of Jackie's feet create an embodied sense of unease. This location is alien territory for Jackie, illustrated when she has to balance carefully to avoid losing her footing as she walks up an incline. In the next shot, the camera lingers for a few seconds on a graffitied wall, and in the next, Jackie is positioned to the right of the image, again hemmed in by two more walls. At this point, it appears as if Jackie's walk is taking her into a corner, before the space opens up into a row of shops set beside a small parking bay filled with refuse and neglected building works.

If walking, as de Certeau observes, is "to lack a place" (1984: 103), then Jackie's incongruity is evident in her movements and in Arnold's cinematic design.

The threshold chronotope invests this scene with transitional significance: her wandering appears aimless, and the subsequent scene, in which Jackie follows Clyde back to the estate and to the café, reinforces this disorientation through several edits that elide a few seconds of diegetic time, cutting from Clyde exiting the launderette to Jackie turning the corner of the row of shops. At this point, the camera remains on, or just behind, Jackie's shoulder. The urban space is the main focus, with patches of scrub in the foreground and the Red Road flats in the distance rising up and out of the shot. Once again, the litter-strewn paths, the graffiti-daubed walls, and the red iron railings hem Jackie into the frame.

The next cut, a few seconds later, shifts the walk to a tarmacadamed access road behind the flats, with Clyde walking in front across the roof of an underground carpark. A further jump-cut shows Jackie walking from right to left of the frame across the rubble-strewn space of a semi-demolished building which leads to another small row of shops and on to the café which both Clyde and Jackie will eventually enter. The camera stays on Jackie as she peers through the windows, watching Clyde as he orders at the counter. The subsequent scene is structured to enhance the sense of suspicion and tension, with alternate edits switching from mid-shots of Jackie looking to the right of the frame at Clyde to over-the-shoulder shots of Clyde's back. From previous scenes, the audience is cognisant of Clyde's streetwise character, and through the positioning of the camera just behind Jackie we are invited to share her apprehension. Tension is increased through the duration of the edits: each time, the shots from Jackie's viewpoint lengthen, lingering on Clyde's actions, the montage creating the expectation that, at any time, his gaze will meet Jackie's. When it does, the cut back to Jackie shows her maintaining eye

contact; however, in the reverse shot Clyde looks away, seemingly unaware of his pursuer.

Given the denouement, a retrospective reading of this walking scene illuminates exactly how the suspense narrative schema is defamiliarised and deconstructed. Jackie's motives for pursuing Clyde remain unclear to the audience, whilst his own character has been carefully constructed and concealed to elicit sufficient uncertainty to suggest that Jackie may well be in danger. The soundscape overlays the ambient sounds of distant traffic with an electronic, often metallic/industrial score contributing to the scene's eerie texture. Even though there are moments in Clyde's interactions with others that ameliorate the tension and suspicion, the uneasiness created by the cinematography, along with Jackie's sense of disorientation, are matched by the conventional signifiers of suspense narratives employed throughout.

Whilst the tactility of walking is emphasised here, it has ceased to be a positive substitute for Jackie's virtual confinement. Instead, she has replaced the heterotopic space of the CCTV room with another, disturbing site. As Lake suggests, Jackie has moved from surveillance mode to one of sub-veillance which entails the "corporeal, haptic, close experience of inhabiting spaces and transgressing boundaries" (2010: 236). Beyond this, however, by exchanging an optic gaze with one that is tactile and sensory, Arnold provides an explicit engagement with traumatic space. Narratively, by beginning to map the physical world, Jackie is also beginning to trace the contours of memory and exorcise its ghosts.

Walking and Desire

In the previous scene, walking is aligned with the crossing over between a state of optic visuality to one of haptic engagement, and subsequent events embroil Jackie into a more sensual and sensory world. Following her pursuit of Clyde, she embarks on a risky venture to gate-crash his party. First, she visits Clyde's flat and reacquaints herself with Stevie and April. Later, as she watches Clyde again from the control room, she discovers that Stevie has stolen her purse.

Jackie's anxiety at retrieving her purse is revealed in the editing and cinematography of the subsequent sequence. Rather than show her journey to the flats, the scene cuts quickly to a repeat of the earlier low angle of the building with Jackie in mid-shot in the foreground. It is night, and numerous off-screen sounds of voices, traffic, a crying child, and music can be heard. A jump-cut to Jackie swigging from a bottle of beer to assuage her nerves cuts to a mid-shot of her approaching the doors to the lobby. Once again, Jackie has to negotiate a threshold, but she can go no further because the man at the reception desk, the gatekeeper of this particular border, will not permit it. Her way in is by following Stevie and April whom she sees through the grimy pane of glass in a telephone box. The camera follows Jackie, keeping her to the right of the frame and in the shadows for 12 seconds as she in turn follows the young couple. Lighting here again subverts the usual conventions, with April and Stevie illuminated by the streetlamps whilst Jackie is in darkness.

A sequence of chance encounters enables Jackie to gain entrance to the flat, and the camera stays close behind her in order to capture the fine margins of her success. At times, it seems as if the camera itself is rushing to keep up, exuding a sense of urgency. She enters through two doors and has to hold the lift-door open to gain access to the space occupied by Stevie and April. For a few seconds, the

camera remains on the three characters, with Jackie in mid-shot occupying the left-hand side of the frame. Her clothing is muted yet also distinctive: she is wearing a hip-length jacket in combat colours, suggesting she is ready for battle. After a few tense moments evading Stevie's questions, Jackie exits the lift onto the 24th floor. Whilst she is no stranger to observing the world from a position of height, she is now doubly removed from safety: not only is she amongst living bodies instead of the simulacra of those on screen, but she is also at the threshold of a potentially dangerous conclusion to her quest.

A 15-second tracking shot follows Jackie into Clyde's flat, followed by another slow walking scene during which she investigates the various rooms. As she leaves the kitchen, and her brief awkward conversation with April, a 180-degree cut shifts from the rear to the front of Jackie. Next, an edit from Jackie's eyeline to a point-of-view shot of the revellers signifies the challenge facing her. This is another threshold that Jackie must cross, with real living bodies interacting with each other. Behind the partying group, another door is illuminated with a green glow. The camera cuts to behind Jackie and follows her along a hallway lit with yellow light. Jackie is in silhouette as she walks slowly towards the doors, and a cut to another point-of-view shot reveals the interior of one of the bedrooms with a mattress on the floor. She pauses for a moment outside Clyde's bedroom, and her investigation, and the potential crossing of another, more significant, threshold is interrupted by Stevie who thinks she is looking for the toilet. Jackie then turns towards the camera, once more silhouetted against the bright yellow lighting in the hallway.

Jackie's entrance into Clyde's flat, and her movement around it, evokes a sense of impending peril. This is implied by the numerous vertical lines of walls and doorways that hem her into the image. In addition, Ryan's cinematography replicates

the conventions of the thriller genre through its highly subjective perspective which follows Jackie's measured progress in tightly framed mid-shots. This spatial immersion into the frame encourages a shared embodied experience, and empathy with Jackie is evoked through the apprehension caused by the possibility of her discovery (Lake, 2010; Pisters, 2014). Furthermore, the *mise-en-scène* of Clyde's flat, with its peeling wallpaper and paintwork, and dirty kitchen floor-tiles from which the dog eats food, signify poverty but also evoke culturally loaded, negative assumptions that accompany such images.²⁰

However, there are visual and narrative clues to indicate that this suspicion is misplaced (after all, Jackie is an unreliable 'narrator'), such as the shift from the cold blue of the communal landing to the warmer lighting of the flat. Furthermore, the mood of the party is celebratory, anything but intimidating to anyone who is meant to be there. As Stewart writes

Part of the conceit [of *Red Road*] is that such images ... signify crime and deviance and that a dramatic reality bite – that is, the violent expression of crime and deviance – is never far away. Yet *Red Road* both depends on and reproduces this assumption while simultaneously seeking to overturn it. (2012: 560)

Jackie has already made similar erroneous assumptions in her readiness to take at face value the images she sees on the monitors: for example, her hastiness to believe that Clyde was a threat to the woman with whom he subsequently has sex, or his encounter outside a school with a girl who turns out to be his daughter, the

²⁰ Jonathan McCalmont observes that "For anyone who has seen footage of Football-related ([sic]) violence or of Britain's late-night high streets, the scene will prove terrifying: A British male who is drunk enough to sing in public is only a few swigs away from being drunk enough to explode into violence (2010, n.p.).

suspicion amplified by close-ups of him offering her an unknown product which may or may not be illegal. Throughout the film, these enigmatic codes (Barthes, 1975) have obfuscated Jackie's motives, but also lure the audience into making the same mistake as she does in a presumptuous reading of the screen image.

Not only does the party scene provide the first intimate meeting between Jackie and Clyde, but it also further reinforces the sense of Jackie's alienation from the world and from her own emotions. The walking and threshold chronotopes combining in Jackie's transgression. Her walking has become an iterative to-ing and fro-ing between two worlds, exchanging the darkened anonymity of CityEye for the shadows of the Glaswegian suburbs. Consequently, she has become an embodiment of Elkin's "investigating" and "peering" flâneuse (2016:22). Concealed in plain sight, Jackie's previous mapping of the city's external locations has metamorphosed into a haptic, tactile penetration of the recesses of Clyde's inner world, a space on which even the CityEye cameras cannot intrude. This world represents Jackie's "heart of darkness" (Stewart, 2012: 565); her physical crossing of the threshold is irrevocable, and she has begun the process of salving her trauma.

Walking as Catharsis

Jackie's eventual catharsis is bound up with walking as a means of finding a place in the community and in the world. These scenes increase the intensity of the walking chronotope and the crossing of thresholds, resulting in Jackie symbolically moving into the virtual spaces of the city that she has so assiduously observed throughout the film. The scene in which she stages a rape to ensnare Clyde is itself an important boundary in the film, and one bookended by two walking journeys. On her way to Clyde's flat, Jackie crosses a number of physical and geographical thresholds.

Before meeting with Clyde at the pub, a brief montage cuts from a close-up of Jackie's discarded wedding ring atop her bedside cabinet to an establishing shot of the benighted city, and then to her getting out of a taxi. As in her previous excursions into Clyde's spaces, walking is preceded by a vehicular journey, but this is one elided in the edit. The elision of the taxi ride, the suddenness of the cut, emphasises the estate's physical separation from Jackie's insular world of TV monitors and lonely domestic settings.

Jackie is out of place in the Red Road flats, and has descended into a world that she has, through the trauma of her loss, rejected and abjected. Abjection, for Julia Kristeva, is closely aligned with a destructive mobility, a walk into the darkness aligned with separation, placelessness, yet one also attracted to that which has been abjected (Kristeva, 1982: 8). Jackie's walking journeys enable her to cross into this world, but she is inevitably drawn "towards the place where meaning collapses" (Kristeva, 1982: 2), in this case the site of her family's death. This disconnect is signified by the film language. With the camera behind her, she approaches the pub before a jump-cut reveals her looking around for something on the floor. The shot is held for several seconds and the tense mood increases as she picks up a stone, the second time in her pursuit of Clyde that she has felt the need to protect herself. Jackie proceeds to walk from left to right of the frame before another jump-cut brings her to the entrance to the pub, a darkened doorway at which both Jackie and the camera pause. These jump-cuts, eliding only a few seconds of chronological time, disrupt the film's temporal and spatial continuity, and contribute to the feeling of dislocation and disconnection. Although this sequence lasts almost 40 seconds, it heightens both the chronotopic significance of this walking journey as an important narrative threshold.

After sex with Clyde, Jackie's methodical and seemingly irrational behaviour further confounds the spectator. She implants Clyde's sperm into her vagina, strikes herself with the stone she had earlier collected, and tears her clothes, all of which is captured in a series of feverish close-ups and jump-cuts. As she flees the flat, the cinematography reflects the energy of Jackie's desperate and anxious departure. A continuous hand-held mobile shot follows her down the road and, before she calls the police, she is measured enough to stop and look at the CCTV camera, a calculated act that ensures there is visual evidence that places her at the scene of the supposed crime.

This reflexive look at the camera signifies Jackie's cognisance of herself as both subject and object of an inquiring gaze. Later on, when she reviews this footage, she sees herself in a blurred high angle long-shot running towards the camera. The images are accompanied by the eerie non-diegetic sound textures that are a motif throughout the film. This ethereal, ghostly effect contributes to the otherness of Jackie's on-screen encounter with herself. Her earlier glance at the camera is returned by her own future gaze in an uncanny repetition, and the look that Jackie casts towards herself is the inward gaze of conscience, each becoming an accusatory double. Whilst Jackie's entrapment of Clyde was designed to be both retributive and cathartic, the look towards the camera is a reminder that she is still trapped outside of the world depicted in the screens: the world of CityEye security and its heterotopic otherness. Her eventual dropping of the allegations towards Clyde signify the importance of the self-reflexive gaze in this instance.

In Jackie and Clyde's final cathartic meeting, they visit the bus-stop, the site of the accident that killed her family. The scene opens with a wide-shot of Jackie and Clyde standing together on the right-hand side of the frame, half-way up a steep

incline. Clyde confesses that this is the place where he lost control of the car before ploughing into the bus-stop which can be seen on the left-hand side of the shot. After this seven-second establishing shot, the camera cuts to a profile of Jackie in a close mid-shot: her face takes up the left-hand side of the frame, not only crossing the spatial line and disrupting conventional film grammar, but also erasing the space where the bus-stop was a moment before. In the two-shot that frames the dialogue, the bus-stop is initially blurred, but as Clyde describes the events of the accident, it becomes visible in sharp focus. In these two-shots, the bus-stop is central, positioned between Jackie and Clyde, but as their dialogue continues, the physical space between them is effaced and so therefore is the bus-stop.

The final shot of this scene is of the bus-stop again, this time it is a straight point-of-view image that stays on screen for five seconds. Apart from the gentle hovering of the camera that hints at her viewpoint, there is no further evidence of Jackie in the frame. Thornham refers to this image as a subversion of “That Long Shot of Our Town from That Hill” (see Higson, 1996).²¹ In the context of *Red Road*, Thornham suggests that “although we can see in the distance the city spread out

²¹ For Thornham, this is an important element in Andrew Higson’s (1996) discussion of the framing of social realist landscapes in that it positions the spectator, and the audience, above the city and “looking down on a cityscape that, with distance, has become beautiful. It is a shot whose self-conscious poeticism points to the ambivalence of the films’ perspective. While their working-class protagonists are returned to an environment whose lost “wholeness” is lamented, the perspective of these shots is that of a distanced observer, one who has escaped” (Thornham, 2016b: 136).

before them, the background is blurred; that is not our focus. It is on details of Clyde's rejected touch, on Jackie's bruised and grieving face, and, finally, on her tentative forgiveness of him" (2016b: 140). Whilst this argument is valid, I also suggest that Jackie's gaze is on a space that becomes a lament for her lost wholeness. Rather than escape this traumatic space, it had become abject; and yet, by walking through the spaces of the city, she has enfolded it back into her consciousness.

From Virtual to Haptic Flâneuse

For John Berger, "a landscape seems to be less a setting for the life of its inhabitants than a curtain behind which their struggles, achievements and accidents take place. For those ... behind the curtains, landmarks are no longer geographic but also biographical and personal" (2015: 19). In her role as CCTV operator, Jackie observes Glasgow's streets as a geographic space, experiencing the lives of others as a one-dimensional, optic gaze. Their true lives, their biographies, and their personalities have hitherto eluded her, and she, like the audience, makes assumptions and conclusions about them based erroneously on prior schemata. Even during her first tentative steps into the landscape, she either fails to connect with the breathing corporeality that she had hitherto observed on screen, or she misjudges it. She has been unsuccessful in her attempts to join this world. Instead, her life, fixed within an abject heterotopic space, a liminal zone somewhere between trauma and retribution, has ossified.

It is Clyde's appearance that creates a catalyst for her to confront and salve her trauma. However, unlike Dave in *Wasp*, or Billy in *Fish Tank*, Clyde does not appear as a male saviour, at least not in the sense of his offering a literal escape.

Instead, his appearance provides a psychological intervention. After her trauma is verbalised through her exchange with Clyde, Jackie is able to cross a threshold, leaving behind the heterotopic space of her traumatised existence and inhabit the real world. Once again, the walking chronotope serves to illuminate this transition, drawing together the various elements of the narrative to create an optimistic conclusion.

This final sequence begins with a wide shot of Jackie standing outside a shoe shop: it is the same location from which the man and his ailing dog emerged. Jackie centre-frame, looking through a window, before turning to walk left and off-screen. It is noticeable that the camera remains static during this shot, one of the few times that it has not followed Jackie's progress. The shot itself is also remarkable in that it is one of only two occasions in the film that Arnold uses a planimetric composition (the first being the moment when Jackie is standing outside the Red Road flats and is dwarfed by their height).²² Although Jackie is looking through another screen, this time a window, there is no eyeline-match to what she sees, and her perspective has been uncoupled from that of the spectator. Her gaze is now her own, and by stepping back from this connection, the film begins to release Jackie into the landscape.

This release continues as Jackie proceeds through the city streets. At first the camera remains behind Jackie in its usual position, but then, for one of the few

²² David Bordwell describes planimetric composition as when "[t]he camera stands perpendicular to a rear surface, usually a wall. The characters are strung across the frame like clothes on a line. Sometimes they're facing us, so the image looks like people in a police line-up" (2007, n.p.).

occasions in the film, the film cuts to reveal Jackie from the front as she walks towards the camera. A full close-up shot of her smiling as she looks frame-right cuts to an image of the dog-walking man, this time with a new dog. Jackie pauses, strokes the dog, and passes a few words with the man. A few frames later, as the camera pulls away, the dancing cleaner is visible over Jackie's shoulder. This short sequence represents Jackie crossing another important threshold: not only has she, for the first time, interacted with others during her walks, it has also brought together the other characters in Jackie's hitherto virtual community. Significantly, as she walks on along the High Street, the camera stops and a gap is opened up between the spectator and Jackie's, a space further extended in the next shot which concludes the film.

For this final shot, Arnold eschews the close, over-the-shoulder intrusiveness that has previously characterised the film's walking sequences. Instead, the film presents a grainy, high-angle CCTV image of Jackie walking along the street (see figure 12). Emerging from the bottom-left corner of the screen, she has stepped into the space behind the monitor and become another object for the CCTV cameras to observe, the spectator now adopting Jackie's previous position as the panoptic observer. There is an optimism to this shot that has been absent from previous walking scenes. It is composed so that the diagonal lines within the frame converge to a point beyond the upper edge of the image and, although there is a uniformity to these diagonals, the framing is slightly off-centre, with the street dominating the right-hand side of the frame. Sunlight from the top of the frame bathes the image, and the cathartic mood is enhanced by the soundtrack which plays Honeyroot's 2005 version of Joy Division's *Love Will Tear us Apart*. The lyrics to the opening verse encapsulate Jackie's journey through the film: "resentment rides high, /but emotions

won't grow, /and we're changing our ways, taking different roads" (Curtis, 1995: 170-171). The final phrase is particularly appropriate in that roads, thresholds, and the chronotope of walking have made the change and the transition possible, providing an antidote to the sedentary, and self-contained, world in which she lives.

If de Certeau's walking practices provoke a mapping of the city, this is possible only through physical encounters. Jackie achieves this by adopting an identity of transience: temporarily casting aside the self that has lived a mechanical existence as an observer of other people's lives, she moves into the liminal spaces behind the monitors, swapping a virtual reality for a corporeal one. Indeed, as Thornham writes, Jackie, by entering the physical realms of the city, has become "de Certeau's streetwalker re-imagined as woman: a redefined *flâneuse*" (2019: 76). But this neglects the haptic importance of Jackie's transformation. According to Hille Koskela, visual surveillance offers merely superficial images "in contrast to the depth and personality sought by traditional disciplinary observation" (2003: 293). Jackie's is a search beyond the screen in order to touch the surface, looking for a haptic experience which the digital gaze cannot provide. Beyond the frame of the CCTV



Figure 12: Jackie crosses over (*Red Road*, Andrea Arnold: 2006).

camera there exists a corporeal world of physical and haptic relationships which are opened up by the act of walking. With this, Arnold hints at the emptiness of the modern age, the unreliability of the technological gaze, and the ease within which we are lost to the virtual in-between.

Jackie's engagement with the physical world of Clyde and the Red Road estate provides a metaphor for the need to adopt alternative approaches to hitherto negatively coded sites and social groups. Haptic visuality encourages an embodied and tactile relationship with space and, through this contact, as well as the process of being with her characters, Arnold offers the spectator a means of transcending any unhelpful schemata. In the next chapter, which examines *Fish Tank*, this challenge to audience perceptions is further developed. Here, walking scenes provide a topography of urban Britain and its fractured nation-space. The threshold chronotope is again dominant, with Mia, like Jackie before her, crossing into the world that exists beyond the tight confines of life on a social housing estate, opening them up for consideration, and demonstrating how walking, for women, enables transformative experiences.

Chapter Four: The Haptic Flâneuse and the Edgelands Aesthetic in *Fish Tank* (2009)

Fish Tank's teenage protagonist Mia is an irascible outsider, a school refuser who has a fractured relationship with her mother and sister. With aspirations to be a dancer, her practice routines, rehearsed in an empty high-rise flat, fill the spaces between the tensions of domestic life and her wanderings through the streets and edgelands of the Essex estate. Her mother's lover, Conor (Michael Fassbender), uses his position of apparent trust to effectively groom Mia into having sex. Realising that the only escape from the paralysis of life on a council estate lies in actual exile, Mia decides to move to Cardiff with her traveller boyfriend, Billy. The epicentre of Mia's flânerie is the chaotic domestic space that she shares with her sister Tyler (Rebecca Griffiths) and her mother, Joanne (Kierston Wareing): from here, Mia radiates outwards to other spaces of conflict and of reconciliation, unravelling the landscape before her. These landscapes continue the portrayal of the built and natural environment which contributes to the edgeland aesthetic that illuminates Arnold's previous films, whilst the film's "power-to" narrative of agency is fully demonstrated in Mia's eventual success in taking personal control of her life.

In *Red Road*, the combination of walking and threshold chronotopes demonstrate the significance of walking scenes to the psychological transformation of character. In *Fish Tank*, and through the character of Mia, walking signifies an act of defiance and resistance to social norms, with walking chronotopes providing narrative space to examine the haptic flâneuse and how she maps out a sensory topography of edgelands and the urban landscape. In addition, threshold chronotopes, such as the travellers' site where Mia goes to tend to the ageing horse,

also double as heterotopias of escape. However, Mia's walking also problematises de Certeau's observation that "to walk is to lack a place" (1988: 103): whilst it offers escape and respite from domestic and emotional crises, walking also provides an antidote to this dislocation, connecting together the narrative threads of the film and its locations: the tower blocks, travellers' sites and housing estates, riverbanks, edgelands, and scrapyards.

Threshold Chronotopes and Confinement

Fish Tank is the first film for which Arnold uses the academy 4:3 ratio which, in its box-like appearance, formally replicates the inherent tensions between confinement and freedom whilst also providing "a very respectful and beautiful frame ... [giving characters] a lot of space" (Arnold in Ballinger, 2013). The film's opening sequence incorporates these tensions between confinement, open space, and the dynamics of movement within the frame, with windows and screens, examples of threshold chronotopes, again dominant.

A black title screen, accompanied by the sound of laboured breathing, replicates briefly the sensory opening to *Red Road*, although this time the film cuts quickly to a mid-shot of Mia, crouching, with her hands on her hips, and tired following the exertions of her dance practice. Vertical lines on the blue wallpaper behind her are a visual reminder of her potential confinement, and as she looks out on the council estate sprawling below, the camera behind her, her silhouette is framed centrally through the window as if the world is an image on a television screen. Beyond lies the looming presence of the edgelands of the Essex landscape with its monolithic wind turbines and electricity pylons rearing up against the flat horizon. She is effectively fixed between these two planes: the 'barred' walls of the

empty flat, and the invitation to escape encapsulated by the landscape beyond. The camera, arcing around her as she speaks on her phone, marks out the parameters of her existence, however. When Mia leaves the frame, the camera remains on the wider landscape for a moment, the wind turbine on the horizon remaining at the centre of the screen. This framing of the landscape hints at the potential of the space beyond, but it also provides a visual topography of Mia's world, the horizon acting as the outer perimeter of her life. As in both *Dog* and *Wasp*, these examples of "intentional landscapes" (Lefebvre, 2006b) are also time-images that enable the audience to "absorb what [characters] have left behind or *sense* what came before them, bonding with the space of their inhabitation" (Bruno, 2002: 99, italics in the original). Through the intimate sharing of space and physicality, along with the focus on the wider location, Arnold thus juxtaposes the themes of confinement and escape which are key themes in the film.

This early gaze out on to the landscape foreshadows the emotional and physical journeys that Mia will make in the film. Like Jackie in *Red Road*, she is a woman at the window. However, rather than the "passive figure ... wistfully waiting" in heritage films described by Pidduck (1998: 383), Mia is a bundle of contemporary energy. The spaces beyond thus become possible territories of exploration for Mia, areas which throughout the film will be connected by her mobility. As with the protagonists in *Wasp* and in *Red Road*, Mia's gaze out of the window is therefore not only a signifier of her sense of confinement but also her desire to escape.

Mia's dissatisfaction with her home-life is a key factor in her constant movement throughout the film. Visually, her desire for escape is captured in the *mise-en-scène*. Mia's bedroom is imbued with signifiers of freedom: from the image of the white tiger against an open sky painted on her door (a symbol of the prowling

Mia) to the bucolic implications of her green bedlinen. Or else there is the presence of the mural on the living room wall, a tropical island landscape against which the trappings of domesticity appear incongruous. However, these symbols of freedom are also countered by recurring motifs of entrapment and exclusion. The geometric forms of the flats as seen from Mia's balcony are metaphors for the lives of their inhabitants: compartmentalised, nondescript containers which convey the frustration of repetition, akin to the cage which houses Tyler's pet hamster. Mia's desire for a room of her own is thus satisfied by the vacant apartment in which she practises her dance routine, for it provides breathing space away from the cluttered *mise-en-scène* of the family home.

Arnold frames the contrasting busyness of the domestic scenes in mid-shot or close-up to emphasise the tight confines of the small hallways, kitchens and living spaces. Characters are obscured by staircases, cramped corridors, and washing lines which drape across balconies. The cinematic frame is filled with doorways that open on to more doorways, creating a visual *mise-en-abyme* which seems to invite Mia further into a labyrinth of trapped domesticity. The motif of confinement is perpetuated by the images of boxes and frames: in one scene Mia's mother performs a dance routine in the kitchen which Mia observes through the square of a serving hatch. This window/screen offers an ironic counterpoint to the images of the female dancers who populate the rap videos which Mia watches on television, but it also provides a visual frame that separates her from the rest of her family.

However, Mia enjoys her separateness. She walks quickly, a process that Hilary Ramsden argues is a way "of 'blending in' of not being noticed" (2014: 236). With her hood over her head, she appears at first to be a loner, ghosting between the spaces of her world. Both sound and camera combine to emphasise this

separation. As she leaves the empty flat in the film's opening scene, the diegetic sounds of her sister Tyler, laughing with her friends, is in contrast to Mia's silence and her determined movements. Low railings separate Mia from the small communal playground which is bathed in sunlight compared to the shadows through which she proceeds. The camera frames Mia closely in a 20-second tracking shot which follows her through the estate to a small residential car park where she encounters a group of girls who are awkwardly performing a dance routine. Mia sits alone on the boundary rail, and, along with a group of teenage boys, is a spectator to the show. The subsequent edits continue Mia's separation, cutting from medium shots of her isolated in the frame to images of the girls from her perspective.

Walking thus becomes, for Mia, an expression of independence demonstrated through her determined stride and focused expression. As with Zoe in *Wasp*, the camera is rarely in front of Mia: as Jacobs declares, it "generates a vital pleasure in motion, a kind of freedom in her step as she blazes a trail ahead" (2016: 172-173). Conventional eye-line matches to illustrate Mia's point of view are rare, and instead, the camera floats around her, capturing what she sees through its movement rather than the conventional grammar of editing. Interestingly, the contrast between this and the cinematography used in her car journeys is noticeable: there, as this chapter will go on to show, the fixed camera used in these scenes implies physical, and emotional, confinement.

Walking and the Cinema of Sensation

The walking chronotope is enhanced by Arnold's aesthetic design which creates an embodied connection to Mia's world. In an early scene in the film, as Mia walks towards Keeley's flat, the ambient sound of Mia's breathing, children's off-screen

voices, birdsong, and footsteps, all amplify the sensory appeal of the scene. Upon reaching the exterior of the building, the camera frames Mia in a medium/long-shot as she collects pieces of gravel which she subsequently hurls at the window, attracting the attention of Keeley's father. The scraping of the stones beneath Mia's fingers and their clinking together in her hand is evident in the soundtrack, drawing attention to the sensation of touch and encouraging an embodied affinity between spectator and action. This sensory connection resonates throughout *Fish Tank*, and the sinuous and visceral cinematography foregrounds the film's corporeality, with Mia's "physicality ... giv[ing] the film its trajectory energy" (Nwonka, 2014: 211).

The sensory empathy provided by the walking chronotope is also evident when Conor takes Mia and her family to visit a nearby nature reserve. As the group exit the car and proceed towards the lake, the camera tracks Mia as she walks through a gateway and into a field, before performing a 180-degree arc to reveal the natural environment of long grass, rows of trees in the background, and a small expanse of water against a blue summer's sky. For a moment, Mia is isolated in the frame as she surveys the scene. She is then followed by the camera, locked in mid-shot as she walks towards the lake. Each element of the frame remains in focus as if a new world has opened up before her. Threshold chronotopes are again invoked as Mia wades slowly into the lake to follow Conor. Again, sensory elements combine, with the sound of the rippling water interrupted occasionally by Tyler's witty dialogue. Close-ups of Mia and Conor's hands immersed into the water as they try to coax the fish to the surface stimulate a shared sense of touch, before a 22-second shot fixes them both in the frame as Conor waits patiently for the fish. Again, the sound of the water is amplified, supported by the wildlife noises which add to the sensory overload of the scene.

The connection between sound and the walking chronotope is further enhanced in the next scene. When Conor offers to carry Mia back to the car, her foot injured after treading on some glass, a 29-second two-shot follows them closely as they make their way back up the hill. The frame speed is slowed down, almost imperceptibly, its haptic sensuality reinforced by the amplification of Conor's breathing combined with the swish of wind through the trees. Dialogue however remains at a normal tempo, a misalignment between sound and vision which disturbs the order of things and gives the scene a trance-like quality. Conor asks Mia if she's okay and she replies, softly, "yeah" before resting her head on his shoulder, her face brushing against the nape of his neck. Mia's voice and Conor's breathing are almost lost amidst the din of ambient sound: the hiss of the wind through the trees, the feel of the breeze against skin. Marks suggests that "[b]y interacting close enough with an image ... the viewer relinquishes her own sense of separateness from the image" (2000: 183). These "audio close-ups", as Beugnet suggests, "[pull] the viewer in and envelops him or her with a sensuous or uncanny sense of intimacy" (2012: 91). As the shot draws to its conclusion, the shadows of leaves fall across their bodies and the two character depart the shot as if melded into the landscape. Arnold's sleight of hand here is expertly constructed: in previous scenes (such as Mia's encounters with the horse which are discussed in the next section), haptic cinematography creates a dream-like effect that embodies Mia's pleasure. However, in this scene it cloaks Conor's insidiousness. In allowing him to carry her, Mia relinquishes her independence, and so the combination of the walking chronotope with the comatose affect suggested by the cinematic design suggest that she is falling into a trap.

Walking and Haptic Space

Walking as an antidote to confinement is demonstrated in Mia's visits to the numerous threshold spaces of the film, including the travellers' site where a grey horse is tethered. Here, the walking chronotope is used explicitly to connect Mia's domestic life to this 'other space' which, eventually, leads to her decision to escape.

The use of walking as a device to connect narrative elements is evident in Mia's first journey the travellers' site, but it is also worthy of analysis as a scene in its own right, and a chronotopic analysis reveals its significance. After her fight with the dancing girls, a jump-cut shows Mia walking away from the estate. Proceeding purposefully along the centre of the road, Mia is in command of the territory with a seven-second shot framing her front on as she traverses from the right to the left of the screen. Just as Jackie in *Red Road* crosses into the world beyond the CCTV screens, Mia has now moved into the empty space that she had observed through the window at the start of the film. Just like her predecessors, Mia's gaze has been transformed from optic to haptic: the spaces beyond have become more than mere spectacles and signifiers of potential; instead they are negotiable sites for her to explore. She has adopted the role of the haptic flâneuse. Mia's purposeful exit from the estate jump-cuts to a closer shot which tracks Mia for 16 seconds as she walks right-to-left of the screen. Noise from unseen traffic dominates the soundtrack, and the chain link fence behind her reinforces the motifs of mobility and confinement recurrent in the film. The tracking of Mia's walk cuts to a point-of-view shot of a horse chained to a concrete block amidst a patch of waste ground. In this scene, walking not only connects urban space to edgeland site, but it also, through the filming of the walk itself, signifies Mia's agency as bound up with her mobility.



Figure 13: the travellers' site (*Fish Tank*, Andrea Arnold: 2009).

The travellers' site is a significant space which Mia visits three times in the film. The first two occasions, which take place within the first ten minutes, are both preceded by her dancing alone in the empty apartment. Structurally and sequentially, this highlights the site's function as a threshold chronotope and juxtaposes Mia's isolation with that of the horse. The horse becomes a symbol of her own confinement, tethered to a world to which it doesn't belong, and this idea is reinforced by visual codes such as the similarities between the horse's grey coat and Mia's costume (see figure 13). In addition, it is presented cinematically as a prohibited space bordered by chain link fencing and metal railings that obstruct the frame, but it also functions narratively as a threshold through which Mia travels in order to achieve self-efficacy.

The site is a typical edgeland location: positioned on a semi-rural patch of wasteland beneath a motorway flyover. These sites of marginal resistance are important tropes in Arnold's films: they border on the lives of her protagonists just as

they sit on the edges of the urban landscape, symbolising the often uneasy and unplanned co-existence of nature and the built environment. The jump cut from estate to travellers' camp thus not only provides narrative conciseness, but it also foregrounds the proximal relationships between edgelands and the built environment.

Here, as in her earlier films, Arnold's edgeland aesthetic alerts the spectator to the visual metaphors which underscore the juxtaposition of stasis and transition, mobility and immobility. As Mia proceeds towards the horse, the image resonates with chronotopic significance. Time, space, and mobility are signified by the ceaseless stream of traffic that passes along the fly-over at the upper edges of the frame, whilst the restricted movements of the horse and the caravan are caught in a state of inertia. In addition, escape, in the presence of the motorway, is just visible but, occupying as it does the edge of the frame, it is also out of reach. In one shot, the irruption of weeds, the parked cars, the horse, and the caravan fill the screen, restricting the cinematic space, whilst the horizontal and vertical lines of the flyover, the pylons, and the wind turbines are confined to the upper part of the image. The horse, the travellers' camp, and the built environment beyond all drift in and out of focus. At the same time the perspective between the disparate elements in the image appears compressed, creating a sense of confinement even within the open spaces of the setting (see figure 14).



Figure 14: layers of edgeland space (*Fish Tank*, Andrea Arnold: 2009).

Mia's encounters with the horse are dominated by haptic images which enhance the spectator's embodied connection to the film. In her search to liberate the horse, she searches for a stone to strike the horse's chains. With the camera keeping her in mid-shot, her hands graze the surface of the ground, touching weeds and soil, before they alight on a stone. The ambient soundtrack is again effective in conveying the sensory experience, and these acoustic close-ups are reinforced by the sound of the distant traffic and Mia's breathing. As she attempts to break the chain, the impact between rock and metal is amplified. The camera tilts up and down, following the arc of Mia's arms, its hand-held qualities creating a muscular empathy between Mia's limbs and the spectator (Barker, 2009), whilst the emphasis on acoustic close-ups helps the film to be "grasped ... by the complex perception of the body as a whole" (Marks, 2000: 145).

Mia's second encounter with the horse follows several scenes which illustrate her increasing disenchantment and frustration. An argument with her mother is followed by more solo dancing in the empty flat. A cut to a shot of a wind turbine

dominating the frame is held for several seconds, before a further edit locates this image within Mia's wider field of vision as she looks out over the urban landscape beyond. The camera is behind her and the background blurred, but these images reinforce the edgeland aesthetic, with their collocation of greenery, housing estates, industrial sites, and traffic. Wind-turbines are a distinctive symbol of edgeland space, and Farley and Roberts hint at their sublime qualities when they consider "[h]ow majestic it would be ... to drive past [these] strips of white daffodils blowing in the breeze" (2012: 193). By drawing the spectator's gaze towards these symbols of energy and industrialisation, Arnold imbues them with a distinctive otherness which belies their reputation as blots on the landscape. The women of costume drama look out with desirous gazes on to manicured lawns (Pidduck, 1998); however, the images with which Arnold replaces these heritage motifs are, nevertheless, endowed with equally poetic qualities.

For the second visit, the walking scene is elided: instead, Arnold cuts from Mia at home to her entering the travellers' camp through its metal gate. A shaky point-of-view shot shows the horse obscured in the foreground by blurred foliage (see figure 15), and as she proceeds, the camera's focal length pulls between the different planes, from the horse to the back of Mia's head. This push/pull of the depth of field creates what Marks refers to as an "embodied visuality" (2000: 145), and this enhances the spectator's intimacy with Mia whilst also, through the dynamics of the focal length, explicitly connecting her situation with that of the animal. This sensory involvement is also captured by the soundscape which foregrounds the crunch of coarse grass and weeds underfoot, the metallic scraping of gates, Mia's anxious breathing, the distant hum of traffic, and the crackling of a plastic carrier bag.



Figure 15: the haptic image of the travellers' site (*Fish Tank*, Andrea Arnold: 2009).

Structurally, the walking chronotope, in its deliberate focus on Mia's slow approach to the horse, increases the spectator's anticipation of Mia's possible discovery by Billy, but the scene also resonates with hapticity. Mia tiptoes towards the horse, and the sharp focus of her figure against the soft focus of the animal conveys an almost dream-like quality. This is followed by close-ups of her hand resting against its neck, and then stroking the horse tenderly. As it responds to her touch, the horse snorts and its coat quivers. At this point, the haptic qualities of the image are enhanced: subtle changes in focus, such as the close-up of the fine bristles on the horse's coat and the natural sunlight that floods the frame, help to render the scene's tactile sensuality, and this is reinforced sonically as Mia gasps and sighs, soothing the animal as if it were a small child.

This scene in particular typifies what Bolton refers to as a "gestural code of representation" (2015: 54) which, by inciting spectatorial absorption, provokes the sensation of being-with the characters and thus inhabiting their worlds. In this way,

the aesthetic of affect negates the objectification of the female body and instead focuses on her perspective. Such images, in the way they absorb the spectator can also be compared with affection-images. Indeed, there is a “perceptive and sensual unity” (Deleuze, 1994: 4) between Mia and the horse: her caress lasts for 40 seconds, and the subjective hand-held camera, the close-up and fragmented shots of the horse, and the blurred background, all combine to disconnect the creature from its prosaic surroundings that are momentarily forgotten in the intimacy of the scene. The sun blooming in the frame, the slowing down of the film, and the muted sound, all evoke a dream-like atmosphere. In all, there is a mystical, sedate quality of the scene that contrasts with the chaos of domesticity which characterises Mia’s home life.

But these are also time-images. The numerous layers that make up the *mise-en-scène* of the travellers’ site further demonstrate the notion of space bearing the signature of time (Massey, 2010). Traditional motifs of rural transport, signified by the horse, sit alongside the modernity of the automobile, crystallising a moment of transition from the urban to the rural. Whilst the time-image suggests a sense of alienation, such spaces are also connected to notions of mystery and beauty (Farley and Roberts, 2012). In this way, the travellers’ site becomes a spectral presence (Oldfield Ford, 2014) imbued with notions of fantasy. The mystical quality of these scenes, and in particular the second sequence, also evokes sense of uncanny familiarity. Depicted as a site of escape from the failure of domesticity, Arnold’s haptic aesthetic foregrounds the vitality and plenitude of the travellers’ site, and thus draws attention to its narrative and symbolic significance. It can thus be interpreted as a liminal space of magic, replacing the trope of the forest in the folk-tale: walking to this place becomes an adventure, and just as the forest is a mystical location

acting as a metaphor for the child's psyche, so the travellers' camp becomes an arena which opens up the conflict between Mia as child and adult, a site of transgression and transformation. However, like the alterity of fairy-tale locations, the travellers' site is also imbued with a sense of danger, personified in the characters of Billy's brothers (Jack Gordon and Jason Maza) who attack Mia and steal her personal CD player. Neither rural nor urban, the edgeland space in this scene is a metaphor for her alienation: it embodies the edgelands as a place that is not necessarily between other spaces, but of itself, where imagination and reflection thrive. It is therefore also a significant example of a threshold chronotope.

Walking as Transition

The walking chronotope connects the film's numerous narrative and topographical spaces as well as triggering the potential for change. To this end, Mia's longest walk follows a trajectory which describes the various layers of the urban environment whilst linking each to its narrative significance. Following the uncomfortable, and disturbing, sex scene between Conor and Mia, she decides to confront him, and so walks to his home. Within its three minutes of film time, this walk takes Mia past factories, industrial estates, pavements lining the A13 dual carriageway, bridges, scrubland, and finally a housing estate, mapping, on its way, the strata of the modern built environment.

The sequence begins with Mia leaving her flat, and a jump-cut reveals a metal gate behind which a pair of dogs guard a small concrete apron on which are parked two white vans and a lorry. Metal railings dominate the frame, and a clump of weeds grows at the bottom edges of the fence. Mia is framed in a mid-shot with the gates in the background and the camera continues to track her as she walks alongside

factory units and discarded pallets. Ambient sound increases the scene's sensory impact as she attempts to contact Conor: the disembodied voices of the 118 operator, Conor's answerphone message, and the wind against the microphone are all audible over the hiss of passing traffic. The transition away from industrial space continues as Mia walks alongside the A13 dual carriageway into Tilbury. Here, the scrub that emerges on the central reservation is more pronounced, a soft-estate that reiterates the porosity of the boundaries between urban and natural life. Mia's reflective, troubled mood is enhanced by the camera's proximity: it pans across her, making the spectator part of its inquiring gaze. Just visible in the background, Billy calls out to Mia from the central reservation, but he appears trapped in this interstitial zone between the frantic movement of traffic on either side of him, and thus he remains, temporarily, excluded from her world.

More than a transition, this walking scene is an event in itself, and it enables a chronotopic reading precisely because it "simulates the attentive looking and the absorption of an environment" (Çağlayan, 2018: n.p.) that demonstrate the film's narrative and thematic concerns on numerous levels. As Mia crosses a flyover, an untypical mid-shot separates her from the spectator (see figure 16), as if the camera has stepped back to permit time and space for contemplation. In addition, both structurally and symbolically, the flyover is a threshold chronotope, a bridge between two narrative worlds: those of Mia and of Conor. She is alone in the frame, and the camera tracks her from left to right in a wide shot lasting 20 seconds. The traffic is less urgent at this point, and in the distance the ordered geometry of a housing estate is overwhelmed by a leaden grey sky. On the horizon, the visual tropes of pylons and tower blocks remind us of Mia's home. The edgeland aesthetic is reinforced by a *mise-en-scène* that consists of dishevelled chicken-wire fences,

weeds sprouting up along the edge of the pavement, and patches of scrub all of which are incongruous against the ordered rectilinear shapes of the buildings that Mia passes on her way to Conor's house in Danton Road.



Figure 16: Mia's longest walk (*Fish Tank*, Andrea Arnold: 2009).



Figure 17: Mia disappears into the estate (*Fish Tank*, Andrea Arnold: 2009).

Conor's more affluent estate is, in contrast to that of Mia's, emptied of people. The uniformity of the housing is, superficially, no different to Mia's block of flats. However, with its signifiers of increasing affluence (the rows of houses, cars and caravans, and its neatly trimmed lawns), this estate is completely outside of Mia's world. As she approaches the buildings, the camera frames her in a long-shot, and she almost disappears into the image as if the background threatens to consume her (see figure 17). The estate appears depopulated: as she walks past the houses, residents are hidden away indoors or at work. It is a ghost town in which all human life appears to have been erased.

The chronotope of walking here is vital in charting Mia's three-minute mini odyssey, mapping out a trajectory that leads from the complicated space that is 'home', and across the shifting shades of urban space to a world that is palpably different to her own. Space unravels, with the *mise-en-scène* contributing to the peeling back of stratified layers of order and control. Walking here is about transformation, and in her anger at Conor, Mia becomes "a potent model of resistance" (Murphy, 2006: 41), one reflected in the spatial geographies and non-spaces through which she walks. The factory units, the footpaths alongside dual carriageways, and the flyovers at the edge of town all come to represent Mia's own "haptic journey of the interior" (Bruno, 2002: 99), as well as the crossing of geographical thresholds that are essential elements in the walking chronotope. Mia's tactile engagement with the Tilbury landscape reinforces the haptic properties of the film whilst also involving the spectator in the embodied experience through the sensory amplification of sound and the proximity of the cinematography. Finally, the

merging of threshold and walking chronotopes is significant for the narrative in that it marks out Mia's transformation from victim to agent of change.

Walking and Ambient Narratives

Signifiers of edgeland space permeate the film and are essential to an understanding of representations of landscape in *Fish Tank*. From electricity pylons to wind-turbines, scrapyards to factory units, Arnold's depiction of these sites reinforces their textures through haptic close-ups and lingering shots which also draw attention to the camera's contemplative presence. Arnold's foregrounding of these spaces is deliberate: her choice of the film's location, the Mardyke estate in Essex, is integral to this aesthetic, and in the press-book release to accompany the film, Arnold said that she "was looking for an estate ... that felt like an island and the Mardyke fitted that description" (in Anon, 2009b: 10). However, this interview also reveals her awareness of the interplay between urban space and the edgelands that push against the borders of the built environment. She says that she "loved the wasteland behind the [Mardyke] estate. [It was] really overgrown and full of wildflowers and birds and foxes and a really big sky" (in Anon, 2009b: 10).

This wasteland becomes the setting for the film's dramatic final act in which Mia kidnaps Conor's daughter, Keira. The scene plays out against the Tilbury docks and the Thames Estuary, and has clear echoes of the earlier sequence which saw Conor and Mia fishing in the woodland lake. This time it is Mia who lures Conor's daughter into the water and almost to her death. The scene is suspenseful, and its disturbing narrative takes place against the empty landscapes that imply Mia's disconnection from events she herself instigates. The scene also foregrounds the corporeality of walking, achieved through an emphasis on the relationship of Mia's

body to the surrounding landscape. Lingering shots of surplus space, alongside the emphasis of acoustic sound, reinforce the film's phenomenological experience.

Examples of "ambient narratives" (Hegglund, 2013), the subsequent scenes resonate with the fusion of industry and the edgelands that stand out from much of the rest of the film. Here, the edgeland aesthetic is enhanced by the contemplation of space that enhances the compatibility of these different aspects of the environment, confirming Arnold's view of these locations as aesthetically beautiful. Early in the sequence, there is a long-shot of Mia and Keira, almost imperceptible amidst the pale grass. The shot is held for 15 seconds as they traverse the horizontal axis of the frame from left to right. The Tilbury landscape dominates the image: a flat horizon meets an early evening sky weighed down with dark, scudding clouds, whilst the diminution of the human figure renders the landscape as a sublime presence. Likewise, the merging of the figures into the grass imbues the image with a painterly quality "whereby the formal composition is arranged for spectator contemplation" (Hockenhull, 2008a: 2).

With its low-level prospect, the composition also reflects the bucolic landscapes of Constable (Hegglund, 2013). Birdsong fills the acoustic space creating a juxtaposition between the soothing sounds of nature and Mia's frustration at Keira's reluctance to obey instructions. This is the furthest, spatially, that the spectator has been from Mia throughout the film, and yet the sound perspective foregrounds Mia's voice as she scolds the girl, creating a sense of disembodiment but at the same time maintaining the spectator's proximity to her actions (see figure 18).



Figure 18: intentional landscape (*Fish Tank*, Andrea Arnold: 2009).

The combination of acoustic sound and lingering shots of landscape reinforce the sensory vitality of these scenes, whilst Mia's marginalisation within the frame suggests separation from any social and behavioural norms which might govern her behaviour. In the sense of Hegglund's "becoming" of space (2013: 286), both characters are submerged in the landscape. This sense of a merging continues into the next shot (see figure 19). A sound bridge from the preceding shot foregrounds the hum of machinery in a field, indiscernible at first from the amplified noise of the breeze against the microphone, but then revealed as the reverberation of combine-harvesters in a field of wheat. Clouds of chaff burst from the rear of the machines, and in the distance, the seemingly ever-present pylons stand in the background. From this, the camera tilts down into the long grass whilst the noise of the breeze is amplified until it is indiscernible from that of the farming machines, creating what Hegglund refers to as an "ambient wash" (2013: 290).



Figure 19: imbrications of industry and farmland (*Fish Tank*, Andrea Arnold: 2009).

The camera's tilt down provides further muscular empathy (Barker, 2009) and replicates a dropping of its gaze from the harvesting of the ordered space of the wheat-fields into the wild grasses that border it. Here, Arnold's foregrounding of sound, along with the lingering eight-second shot, emphasises the sensory vitality of the film itself to such a degree that the spectator is absorbed into the cinematic space. There is no narrative imperative for this second image, yet the director's artistic voice is also present, directing the spectator to a landscape imbued with the conflicts of ordered and disordered space, drawing attention to the acoustic landscape whilst also encouraging the viewer to inhabit those spaces left behind by her characters.

As Mia leads Keira through the scrubland via a hole in the chain-link fencing, another threshold chronotope, the more open forms of the earlier shots give way once more to Arnold's subjective cinematography. The camera tracks Mia, pulling in

and out of focus as she follows a meandering path through the labyrinth of dykes that border the river, whilst whip-pans from Keira back to Mia emphasise the dramatic intensity of the scene, once more rendering the moment as an example of embodied empathy. Keira runs away, and, as Mia chases the child along the sandbanks bordering the river, the sound of Mia's footsteps on the sand combine with the ambient sounds of gulls and the hiss of water to add to the scene's sonorous qualities. Keira eludes capture and turns towards the heathland, clambering over hillocks as she goes.



Figure 20: Keira merges into the landscape (*Fish Tank*, Andrea Arnold: 2009).

This moment in the film resonates strongly with the cinema of sensation (Beugnet, 2012): the use of slow-motion along with Mia's pronounced breathing amplified over the soundtrack adds to the eeriness of this sequence whilst also recalling the aesthetics of the earlier scene when Mia attempts to free the horse. For a moment, the image blurs out of focus to such an extent that Keira almost dissolves

into the background (see figure 20). Finally, when Mia chases Keira, the camera pauses for a moment, then follows her gaze to the right as the child runs away up a hillock before whip-panning back to Mia. This movement draws the spectator's attention to the body of the film itself: the snatch of the camera creating a muscular empathy (Barker, 2009), its mobility reinforcing the sense of an embodied experience.²³ Throughout, the absorption into the scene encouraged by the visual and aural aesthetic creates a moment of mutuality "in which the viewer is more likely to lose herself in the image, to lose her sense of proportion" (Marks, 2000: 184). Kia's dissolving into the frame represents Mia's own uncertainty, and Conor's betrayal of both 'mothers' (Mia's and Keira's) along with Mia's realisation that she has been exploited and abused manifests itself in this moment of anger and violence. Keira's absorption into the scene is also significant in that it provides a moment of spectatorial intimacy reinforcing the sense of being-with Mia and inviting the spectator to share in her disassociation from the child as well as from the events about to unfold.

The scene in which Mia attempts to drown Keira further problematises the relationship between the audience and Mia herself. As with watery scenes in

²³ On the other hand, when conventional eye-line matches do occur during the walking sequences they become noticeable because of their infrequency: Mia's first sighting of the horse is an eye-line match following the conventional shot-reverse shot sequence, as is the shot of Billy walking along the central reservation which occurs as Mia walks to Conor's house. These two examples, although not isolated, also combine to form two important narrative moments in that both the horse and Billy become significant elements in her decision to leave home.

Wuthering Heights and *American Honey*, allusions to Biblical imagery of baptism and rebirth can be drawn. However, there is a sense that Mia's attempt to drown the girl only to then rescue her provides a moment of catharsis. As disturbing as her actions may be, the imagery that follows this imply a lingering sense of reflection. Following the avoidance of disaster, the scene concludes with a 10-second, post-diegetic shot of waves crashing against the shoreline. Within the frame, Arnold combines images of the Thames with those of industry: pylons border the riverbank and power stations line the horizon. This nine-second shot embodies the edgeland aesthetic as well as captures the environmental tensions within the frame. Like the waves against the shoreline, the erosion of the landscape is continuous, and this time-image "quivers with the suggestion of activity, possible narratives that might unfold within the slumbering stasis of the shot" (Hegglund, 2013: 282). The amplified ambient sounds coupled with the absence of the human subject again indicate an uncanny presence. In this case, the post-diegetic emphasis on the waves lapping against the shore and the stillness of the industry behind suggest the edgeland as a space of redemption. For Bjorn Thomassen, the border between land and sea, is an "archetypal liminal space" (2012: 21) whilst for Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts, it is a space of "death, fear, uncertainty and disorientation" (2012: 6). However, instead of the negative connotations afforded to it by these writers, the crash of waves also symbolises Mia's retreat from the edge of an abyss. The camera also moves back from the brink, and thus imbues this particular border with hope and the potential at last for escape.

These scenes reveal the edgeland aesthetic as a key characteristic of the walking chronotope. Juxtaposing images of edgelands, nature, and industry, Arnold articulates the tensions between the pastoral and the technological. In its "hybrid

cinematic fusion of natural and built environments” (Hegglund, 2013: 275), it presents a version of social reality that moves away from an emphasis on macro-structures. However, whilst Hegglund notes that Keiller’s cinema of the contemporary built environment leads to the human figure being “mediated and marginalised” (2013: 292), it would be incorrect to restrict the narrative of *Fish Tank* to an empty aesthetic. By encouraging the spectator to live in Mia’s world, the film also invites audiences to question their own misconceptions and prejudices. The walking chronotope thus encourages a consideration of walking as an opportunity for characters to interact with the physical spaces of their world and become agents of change.

Other Mobilities: the Car as Heterotopic Site

The car’s mechanical mobility replaces that of walking but it also limits the agency of its female occupants. In *Fish Tank* (as in Arnold’s previous films), cars are driven by men, in this case either Conor or Billy, and carry Mia from domestic environments to spaces of potential threat or escape. When in the passenger seat, Mia’s movement is restricted: visually, as indicated by the cinematic grammar, and spatially in that her destination is dictated by the driver of the car. Cars are also emblematic of the encounter chronotope in that they offer space for clandestine meetings, but their heterotopic qualities are evident in their narrative function. They aid narrative progression in that they provide space for illicit and prohibited relationships to develop, and so become heterotopias of illusion. As Kuperus observes, and is explained in chapter one, cars are always “somewhere else” (2016: 90) and in these scenes, Conor is able to isolate Mia from her world and, in doing so, he can invent an alternative, unreal space for him to lure Mia into his.

In the first of Mia's three car journeys, Conor drives the family to the woodlands where they begin to bond as a unit. Throughout this sequence, Mia is framed tightly within the vehicle and the camera remains positioned in the back seat recording the interplay between Conor and Joanne. However, whilst Mia appears excluded from the dialogue, the exchange of looks between Conor is inclusive. These diagonal eye-line matches are repeated several times, and his returned glances signify his objectification of, and inappropriate desire towards, Mia. Through the car window, the camera alternates between over-the-shoulder and point-of-view shots as Mia looks out on to landscapes that have become familiar images in the film: rows of electricity pylons, rotating wind-turbines, motorway barriers, and soft-estate. Whilst she sleeps, the camera follows the car's trajectory from left to right, mapping the movement from the city to the countryside. The grammar of the editing in this sequence therefore differs subtly from that employed in the walking scenes, and provides an extended demonstration of 'seeing' from Mia's perspective.

In another car scene, Conor drives an angry Mia away from his house. This time, Mia is in the front seat, but once again, the camera is located behind the two characters, placing the spectator in the position of an observer of awkward silences which last for most of the scene. An initial 15-second two-shot, with the camera centrally positioned on the back seat, establishes the small gulf between the two characters. It is raining, and the inclement weather reflects Mia's turbulent emotional state. A cut to a closer shot of Mia, with the camera slightly behind her, fixes the spectator in close proximity to her as she stares ahead at the still-falling rain. Of the scene's three and a half minutes, 70 seconds are filmed from this position, establishing Mia's sense of isolation and vulnerability, conditions exacerbated by the continued sound of the rain and the click of the car's electrics. In this instance, the

stillness of the camera jars against the mobility of Mia's walks, augmenting her sense of dislocation and displacement within the confines of the car. Only when Mia gets out of the car does the camera come alive once more, as if, like Mia, it had been caged for the duration of the scene.

After being dropped off at the train station by Conor, a jump-cut shows Mia obscured behind the almost opaque glass panel of a platform shelter. The glass is smeared with dried milky-white fluid and Mia appears almost as a ghost behind the clouded screen. It is as if she has become a spectre of herself: almost muted in the car, Conor's reassurances have reduced her to a cipher, the jilted 'other' set aside for future reference. Arnold holds the shot for ten seconds before Mia steps outside from behind the screen, a purposeful gaze out beyond the camera's lens signifying a change of mind, and a reawakening of spirit. The reverse shot reveals a train approaching and Mia remains almost motionless. In the next shot, she looks to her left and then down before the film cuts suddenly to her striding back through Conor's estate. This rejection of the train as a mode of transport is not only a rejection of Conor's plan for her, but also a symbol of the flâneuse's independent spirit. Here, the power of walking is a means of transformation, and Mia moves from the masquerade of 'other woman-ness' to a figure of resistance which sees her reject the role that men have in store for her.

Mia's final car journey occurs at the film's conclusion as she leaves for Cardiff with Billy. Her escape is problematic and open-ended: when asked by her sister why she is taking so many things with her to Cardiff, Mia replies with "you never know". The framing of Tyler through the rear window is another example of screens functioning as threshold chronotopes. This time, the implication is that it is the younger sister who remains trapped. At the start of the film, Mia's gaze out onto the

landscape defined the parameters of her existence, whilst at the end, the screen limits the scope of Tyler's world. This secondary framing is important in providing a mediation between Mia's viewpoint and the spectator. Although she has escaped the potentially damaging paralysis of life on the estate, the situation for Tyler might be less optimistic.

The ending to the film provokes contrasting opinions, and Arnold is criticised for concluding her narrative with an enabling male figure of redemption, thus problematising Mia's role as a transgressive figure (Nwonka, 2014). Indeed, for Justine King, the transgressive woman is one who "resist[s] the generically conventional drive towards a reinscriptive or punitive ideological narrative closure" (1996: 219), and in the case of Mia, it is she who depends upon Billy to take her to Cardiff, and it is also his suggestion which prompts her decision to leave. However, the narrative offers alternative readings, and by emphasising Mia's agency, it is possible to show that she has crossed an important threshold in order to take control of her own life. The fact that the final shot is of Mia alone in the frame and not a two-shot with Billy might suggest the continuance of her individuality.

More appropriate, then, is King's observation that "it is only when ... women cross the liminal threshold and remove themselves from their everyday, familiar surroundings ... that inhibitions are dissolved ... and self-transformations effected" (1996: 221). Through the intense focus on confinement in the film's *mise-en-scène*, along with the complex plot challenges she poses Mia throughout the film, Arnold depicts life for Mia, and young women like her, as a conflict between mobility and stasis, and shows that, for any woman in Mia's position, to effect any change is an immense feat. However, Arnold uses walking and threshold chronotopes to reinforce the importance of mobility in enabling this transformation.

Mia's walking is imbued with notions of freedom and purpose, a haptic flâneuse whose wandering "map[s] our ways of being in touch with the environment" (Bruno, 2002: 6). She guides the spectator through the landscape of the modern built environment, and her walking enhances the spectator's feeling of absorption into the physical spaces of the film. In addition, her defiant actions echo throughout the narrative, and her refusal to conform makes her fiercely independent. This is reinforced by her constant mobility, but also in her alignment with Billy, the traveller, and their departure for Cardiff. Mia's walking thus provides her with the freedom that is denied in the domestic and interior spaces of the film. To invoke de Certeau (1988), lacking a place, Mia *is* place: an energetic embodiment of the modern world in motion.

Arnold's next film, *Wuthering Heights*, moves away from the contemporary built environment to the Yorkshire Moors, where walking through the landscape is imbued with an elemental modality that emphasises the relationship between nature and the walking body. Here, the themes of displacement are more pronounced and embodied in the character of Heathcliff, who contributes a very different dimension to the chronotope of walking.

Chapter Five: Elemental Modality and Heterotopic Space in *Wuthering Heights* (2011)²⁴

Wuthering Heights marks a change in direction for Arnold in a number of ways. Firstly, it moves away from her usual settings in both time and space, replacing the modern built environment with the moors of nineteenth-century Yorkshire. Secondly, unlike her previous original screenplays, this film is an adaptation of a classic novel. However, a closer inspection of the film's aesthetic qualities, and its presentation of character and landscape, reveals a continuation of her themes of marginalisation, transgression, and of an embodied experience of space. Furthermore, whilst Arnold's interpretation follows cinematic tradition in concentrating upon the relationship between Heathcliff and Cathy, it also articulates essential themes of race, class, and gender that have been downplayed or even ignored in previous versions of the film (Shachar, 2012). In addition, Arnold's *Wuthering Heights* also signals a rupture in her approach to the female experience of space and mobility, exemplified through the prominence of a male character, Heathcliff.

Whilst this chapter examines Heathcliff's importance to the walking chronotope, it also recognises the vicissitudes of Cathy's mobility. Her relationship with him is fragmented by the two halves of the narrative: the first half of the film

²⁴ To avoid confusion with the various iterations of *Wuthering Heights* throughout this chapter, I codify as follows: film versions of *Wuthering Heights* will be *italicised*, preceded by the director's surname; Brontë's novel will be referred to as Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* or else will be made clear in the context of the sentence; the place where the Earnshaws live, *Wuthering Heights*, will **not** be italicised.

focuses on the symbiosis of the younger characters as they walk together on the moors, their journeys imbued with an elemental modality and freedom from authority. However, in the second half, which concentrates on their adult years, their walking is restricted by social convention, confinement, and surveillance. This impacts upon Heathcliff as a walker: whilst his younger perambulations are overwhelmingly haptic, his adult experiences are ruptured by his severance from Cathy, and he is forced to perform the role of observer. The tensions in this dichotomy are foregrounded in the editing of these later scenes which disrupts time and space and thus also disturb narrative fluency.

Although the walking chronotope dominates this chapter, it is also necessary to locate the film within the “cultural afterlife” of Brontë’s novel. This term is used by Hila Shachar to describe how the novel has been the subject of numerous adaptations that have taken on many forms (2012: 1-2). By examining other iterations of the film, it is possible to shine a light on Arnold’s use of walking as a means of critiquing the more conventional approaches to space and time evident in these other versions. Finally, as Michael Lawrence notes, “Arnold’s film differs from earlier adaptations of *Wuthering Heights* in its mode of presenting the natural environment” (2016: 178), and so I examine the elemental modality of this version alongside its dialogue with Brontë’s novel.

Versions of Heathcliff

The narrative of Emily Brontë’s only novel, *Wuthering Heights* (1847) is well-known. A *bildungsroman*, it charts the story of the foundling Heathcliff and his passionate relationship with Cathy Earnshaw. Following her marriage to Edgar Linton, and her subsequent death from consumption, the story prioritises Heathcliff’s obsessive

desire for vengeance on those who sought to come between him and Cathy, most notably her mean-spirited brother, Hindley, as well as the wealthy Lintons.

Brontë's narrative follows a complex, multi-layered structure, and is told through a number of narrators, but film versions have tended to concentrate on the central relationship between Heathcliff and Cathy. In this case, Arnold's version is no exception to this tradition.²⁵ However Arnold's decision to cast black actors in the role of the younger and older Heathcliff helps to articulate his otherness in relation to his cinematic predecessors as well as the other, white, characters in the film itself.

A consideration of Heathcliff's 'otherness' is vital to this study. Arnold's iteration can be seen as a symbol of the nineteenth-century female experience of walking whilst also embodying the concerns of race and class, continuing her cinematic exploration of the dispossessed and those who are off-the-network (Mathieson, 2015). As in the novel, Heathcliff and Cathy are the film's pivotal characters, but Arnold's version of the story is told through Heathcliff's perspective. Consequently, he takes up more of the screen time, and some of the more

²⁵ To date, in addition to Arnold's version, there have been several film and television adaptations of the novel, including: *Wuthering Heights* (Bramble, 1920); *Wuthering Heights* (Wyler, 1939); *Wuthering Heights* (Nickell, 1950. Live TV broadcast); *Abismos de Pasion* (Buñuel, 1954); *Wuthering Heights* (Sasdy, 1967. TV series); *Wuthering Heights* (Fuest, 1970); *Wuthering Height* (Hammond, 1978. TV series); *Hurlevent* (Rivette, 1985); *Arashi ga oka* (Yoshida, 1988); *Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights* (Kosminsky, 1992); *Wuthering Heights* (Skynner, 1998. TV movie); *Wuthering Heights CA* (Krishnamma, 2003. TV movie); *Wuthering Heights* (MTV, 2003).

structurally important walking scenes in the film are made by him alone. In a study that examines the haptic flâneuse, Heathcliff might appear incongruous. However, his character crystallises many of the significant ideas raised in this thesis, notably Bolton's notion of the female consciousness (2015), and he also embodies key concerns in relation to the text's cinematic history.

Despite previous cinematic versions of the novel depicting Heathcliff as a Romantic and Byronic figure, his place within a discourse of colonial oppression is rooted in the novel. As Susan Gillman observes, Brontë's novel is "arguably from the start, a historical novel of slavery" (2015: 5). In the novel's opening chapters, Heathcliff is described by Lockwood as "a dark-skinned gypsy" (Brontë, 2003: 5). He is a foundling, brought home by Earnshaw from Liverpool docks which was a central landing point for African slaves (Taylor, 2012). For Arnold, this reading of the novel is far from speculative:

If you go through the descriptions of Heathcliff in the book, it is very, very clear that he's not white. "Was your mother an Indian princess and your mother a Chinese emperor?" That's not being said about somebody who's from Yorkshire. When he first arrives, he speaks a language they can't understand. Hollywood started making this film a long time ago, and it's actually surprising to me that no one has done it before. There was a massive slave port in Liverpool at that time. It's possible that Heathcliff could have been the son of a slave or had come off one of the ships. It's possible. (Arnold in Dale, 2012)

In the film, as in the book, Heathcliff's introduction arouses powerful emotions: the younger Cathy spits on him when she first sees him, and he is subsequently brutalised and treated as an animal by both Hindley (Lee Shaw) and Joseph (Steve Evets). Furthermore, when Joseph whips Heathcliff, the racial differences load the scene with connotations of racial cruelty and oppression. In addition, throughout the film, Heathcliff's voice is repeatedly silenced by those belonging to a dominant white patriarchy. His otherness can also be extended to a gendered reading of his

character. Indeed, for Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, the novel invites a feminist interpretation of Heathcliff's character:

On a deeper associative level, Heathcliff is "female" – on the level where younger sons and bastards and devils unite with women in rebelling against the tyranny of heaven, the level where orphans are female and heirs are male, where flesh is female and spirit is male, earth female, sky male, monsters female, angels male. (1984: 294)

This alignment of Heathcliff with women's experiences is evident not only through his exclusion from patriarchal structures, but in his congruence with Cathy. That they are inseparable is illustrated in the novel when Cathy declares to Nelly: "I *am* Heathcliff! ... So don't talk of our separation again: it is impracticable" (Brontë, 2003: 82).

Implied here is an acknowledgement of Heathcliff's gender fluidity, contributing to the novel's concern with boundaries and transgression. As Pauline Nestor observes, "the distinction between self and other is not as immutable in *Wuthering Heights* ... and nor is that between male and female (2003: xxvii)". I argue that this mutability of gender is central to an understanding of Heathcliff's function in the film. However, whilst it would be easy to draw on feminist studies to enlist what has hitherto been an unreconstructed and irrevocably male figure to this cause, it is also important to note that Arnold also sees Heathcliff as an androgynous figure (see Taylor, 2012).

The film's continuance of the haptic aesthetic in relation to Heathcliff's sense of exclusion also allies him with Arnold's previous female characters. Throughout, both Heathcliff and Cathy are aligned with the earth, thus reinforcing the elemental modality of his own mobility that is exemplified in their shared journeys across the moors. It is important to state that this study does not assign to Heathcliff the role of 'woman': instead, it acknowledges Irigaray's proposal that a female subjectivity is not singularly 'feminine' but can also be appropriate for a male subject, "inviting him to redefine himself as a body with a view to exchanges between sexed subjects"

(Irigaray, 1993: 59). The imbrication of Heathcliff and Cathy counters traditional representations of him as a “[parade] of masculine pain, in which masculine identity and authority are formed through the evocation of the suffering male body as a symbol of transcendence of context and circumstances” (Shachar, 2012: 183). Instead, his otherness is conveyed through the ideological and aesthetic decisions of production, such as the casting of a black actor and the eschewing of the cinematic traits of heritage film.

Walking in Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*

Arnold’s film articulates the elemental modality and sensory intensity of the source text. As Deborah Lutz observes:

While nature and the wind brought Emily a kind of spiritual transcendence, being *in* and feeling *with* the body was part of the magic of the moors for her. Walking is a way of being in the body; its restlessness and movement can make it an articulation of yearning. ... Somehow she needed to transcend the body in her imaginative flights, but also be with and in it, in order to feel the gust on her cheek or the sunshine on her skin. (2016: 88, italics in the original)

The Brontë’s love of walking on the Yorkshire Moors is well documented, and Emily Brontë’s novel is infused with a physicality that reflects this.²⁶ As Mathieson (2015), Wilson (1991, 1992) and others have argued, and noted here in the introduction, in Victorian times women’s walking activities threatened the stability of social order, with their journeys providing space for identity and friendships to be forged. Similarly, Lutz observes that in that period, “because of the widespread belief that there was

²⁶ See Lutz (2016), for a comprehensive account of the Brontë’s fascination with walking on the Yorkshire Moors.

something not quite correct with wayfaring women, the act of walking became a recognised form of defiance” (2016: 79).

Walking as an act of defiance is evident from the opening chapters of Brontë’s novel, in which Lockwood, the new tenant at Thrushcross Grange, pays a visit to his landlord, Heathcliff, at the neighbouring Wuthering Heights farm. During his stay there, Lockwood is alarmed to be visited, in an apparent dream, by the ghost of Catherine Earnshaw/Linton. During the encounter, Lockwood grasps the phantom’s arms which she had thrust through the window, drawing her blood against the broken panes. Shocked, the guest rouses an angry Heathcliff to demand an explanation, explaining that Catherine (Cathy) had “told me she had been walking the earth these twenty years: a just punishment for her mortal transgressions, I’ve no doubt!” (Brontë, 2003: 27).

The socially conservative Lockwood, the controlling voice of Brontë’s complex narrative structure, explicitly identifies Cathy’s walking as a purgatorial act of contrition, a punishment meted out upon her for her refusal to be contained by social norms. And yet it also connects walking with notions of defiance and resistance: as Lutz affirms, Brontë had, in Cathy, “created a character who broke convention by using her two feet” (2016: 80). Like Arnold’s film, Brontë’s narrative emphasises the vitality of walking as corporeal practice and a means by which both Cathy and Heathcliff are able to escape the confines of their world. Indeed, in the novel, Lockwood’s first encounter with Cathy’s diaries reveals to him her impatience to “scamper on the moors” so that she may escape Hindley’s oppressive treatment of her (Brontë, 2003: 22), whilst Nelly Dean remarks that “it was one of [Cathy and Heathcliff’s] chief amusements to run away to the moors in the morning and remain there all day” (Brontë, 2003: 46). Therefore, for Brontë’s Cathy and Heathcliff,

walking is imbued with notions of defiance and resistance, self-preservation, and shelter from a world which had alienated them.

In the novel, Lockwood's encounter with the spectral Cathy signifies her desire to break through the porous boundaries between life and death, explicitly connecting walking with a state of liminality. Walking is a site of difference and otherness, invested with notions of play as well as the pains and pleasures of physical and sexual exploration. Remaining faithful to Brontë's sensibilities, Arnold emphasises the physicality of the natural environment and the immediacy and vitality of its effect on the body (Antunes, 2015). The walking journeys in the film are intense sensory experiences and, despite the film's generic departure from her earlier work, they contribute to Arnold's ongoing interrogation into the relationship between the mobile body and space. Imbricating innocence and experience, these walking journeys resonate with an 'otherness' redolent of the heterotopic sites examined in previous chapters. Such heterotopic spaces are invested with the power of imagination, and the walking journeys across the moors in the film highlight this. Arnold's cinematography and editing repeatedly emphasise the ethereal as well as the corporeal aspects of these walks, whilst the moors themselves signify the 'other' place where Cathy and Heathcliff can escape from the strictures and structures of society.

Walking and Visual Excess: *Wuthering Heights* and Heritage Cinema

To explore further Arnold's uniqueness in identifying walking as a vital element in the novel, it is worth spending some time on the relationship between walking and space in other film versions of the novel, each of which emphasises different elements and concerns of the novel, unsurprising given the depth and richness of its themes and

characterisation. To Gilbert and Gubar, *Wuthering Heights* is a “famous nineteenth-century literary puzzle ... [and] an enigmatic romance of metaphysical passion” (1984: 249); to others it is a Gothic study of vice and sadism (Moers, 1974). However, the novel’s layered narrative structure, as well as its wider dynastic concerns, are ignored by film-makers (and this includes Arnold) who have focused on Cathy and Heathcliff to the detriment of other plot details, for example the relationships between Catherine Linton (Cathy II), Linton Heathcliff, and Hareton Earnshaw (see Stoneman, 1996, and Shachar, 2012, for a fuller discussion of the perceived imbalance between the two halves of the novel).

Shachar argues that the reduction of the text’s complexity to “a transcendent love story with a pair of archetypal lovers” (2012: 9), which has subsequently become inseparable and synonymous with the cultural afterlife of the novel, is due in the main to William Wyler’s 1939 version of the film which has done much to create the “popularly held but misleading assumption that [Brontë’s] *Wuthering Heights* represents the *locus classicus* of bodice-ripping romantic fiction” (Miller: 2003: vii). Even though the Cathy/Heathcliff relationship provides much scope for an exploration of the human condition, it has enabled filmmakers to avoid the wider issues of gender, race, and class with which the source text engages, thereby reducing Brontë’s narrative into the clichés of costume and heritage drama (Shachar, 2012: 199). This sanitisation of the novel’s concerns leads to a misrepresentation of its geographical space and its characters’ relations to landscape. For Shachar, nowhere is the notion of landscape as spectacle more evident than in one of the most enduring images in the cultural and cinematic afterlife of Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*: that of Cathy and Heathcliff looking across the moors from atop a craggy hilltop (Shachar, 2012: 9)



Figure 21: walking for inspiration (*Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights*, Kosminsky: 1992).

This emphasis upon the spectacle of landscape contributes to the description of previous cinematic adaptations as examples of what Andrew Higson terms heritage cinema. By this, he means films which

[play] a crucial role in [the] process of imagining English nationhood, by telling symbolic stories of class, gender, ethnicity, and identity, and staging them in the most picturesque of landscapes and houses of the Old Country ... [a landscape] which is "idealized, sanitized, and rendered harmless and unthreatening. (Higson, 2003: 50-52)

Therefore, in romanticised cinematic interpretations of the Yorkshire Moors, such landscapes are imbued with mythical notions of a traditional England which is deemed lost, a past to be reclaimed through artistic representations of place, and this is reinforced in the walking scenes portrayed in these films.

One such walking scene occurs at the very beginning of Peter Kosminsky's 1992 version. The camera follows a fictive Emily Brontë (Sinead O'Connor) in a long-shot as she makes her way across the moors towards a grand, but derelict, house which acts as the imagined inspiration for the novel's meta-narrative which the film recounts. The visual spectacle of the landscape is established from the beginning,

with the figure of Brontë almost imperceptible against the moors and dwarfed by the expanse of sky. That she is part of the landscape is reinforced by her dark costume which helps her to blend into the surroundings, and this visual connection is further extended when she approaches two standing stones (see figure 21). These three upright figures combine in a visual metaphor which imbricates the narrative, the fictive Emily Brontë, and the landscape, as elements of a mythical, even mystical, cultural tradition. This is reinforced by the woodwind-dominated soundtrack which adds to the pastoral, Celtic atmosphere, deepened further by the casting of the Irish singer in the role of Brontë. Whilst the walker is clearly in deep, reflective mode, the film denies a sensory connection to the body, instead cutting to high angles or wider shots to continue the display of space as spectacle.

Destination is prioritised over the journey, evident in the fictional Brontë's appearance in the doorway of the ruined Gothic mansion which will inspire her story. In this long-shot, she appears in silhouette, the light from the sun behind her creating a dramatic entrance. As she walks further into the room, she removes her hood. The close-up reinforces the Romantic aesthetic: in features, O'Connor's Brontë resembles a Pre-Raphaelite model with dark, wavy hair framing chiselled facial features, once again connecting the visual language of the film to a sense of cultural and artistic heritage. The withholding of the object of her gaze until the next shot further enhances the notion of space as spectacle, with the eyeline match revealing a spacious and neglected interior, invaded by overgrown foliage and washed by a ray of light that falls through the windows and the skylight. The fact that, in this film version, Brontë's narrative begins to unfold as Cathy walks implicates walking itself with the imaginative mind, a reminder of the Romantic perambulations of Samuel Coleridge and William Wordsworth for whom walking was a means of attuning to

nature (see Wordsworth and Coleridge, 1991). Here then, walking journeys are implicated in storytelling, and are extracted from the environs of the mundane, acquiring instead a mythopoeic status.

In William Wyler's 1939 version, walking is a heroic act aligned with the conquest of landscape, as exemplified in the early scene when the younger Heathcliff (Rex Downing) is urged on by Cathy (Sarita Wooten) to climb Penistone Crag and take it as his castle. Heathcliff's ascent is captured in both long and medium shots, viewed from Cathy's perspective. He is alone in the frame, and so space and character are part of a visual unfolding of narrative which presents Heathcliff as conqueror of the landscape. Later, he is framed with Cathy in a two-shot with the craggy rock behind as he 'claims' the land and pronounces Cathy his Queen. In later scenes, static camera set-ups fix the older Heathcliff and Cathy in long-shot as they walk towards their hilltop castle, cutting to low-angled two-shots as they gaze out on the space beyond. Here,

images of the landscape and of Catherine and Heathcliff on the 'moors' are strikingly still for prolonged periods of time. There is a self-conscious staginess to their interactions on the landscape, in which they are placed in positions for prolonged periods of time, as if they are posing for a photograph. (Shachar, 2012: 42)

In all these scenes, the spectator is denied a cut-away to a wider shot of the moors, reinforcing the priority of character over setting and eschewing any sense of tactile, physical engagement with the landscape. Walking thus functions as a connecting device rather than a narrative end in itself. Likewise, in Coky Giedroyc's 2009 adaptation, Heathcliff (Tom Hardy) is frequently captured in extreme long-shot as he walks across the moors: character is once again sublimated to space, with Heathcliff's presence in the shot an indicator of what Sinnerbrink refers to as a "disclosive mood" in which audiences are "attune[d] ... to the various tonal qualities

of the narrative” (2012: 156). Consequently, he becomes the isolated romantic hero who possesses the landscape with his gaze.

Walking and the Rejection of Heritage

By examining previous film versions, it is possible to identify how walking in Arnold’s version enables a consideration of landscape and character that moves beyond speculative images of a lost Romantic idyll, and instead foregrounds the novel’s concerns with the physicality of existence. Landscape in Arnold’s interpretation is not, as Irene Musumeci affirms, “the pastoral country of sanitised costume drama, nor the land we have come to picture through the Romantics’ depictions of the Lake District” (2016: n.p.). Instead, “place is possessed with a portentous memory ... a parchment torched with past abuse and trauma” (Musumeci, 2016: n.p.). Memory, trauma and brutality all figure strongly in Arnold’s previous work, and such links are emblematic of her authorial presence as well as providing a lens through which to read her version of *Wuthering Heights*. Space here is returned back to its harsh brutality, and the *mise-en-scène* is replete with images of backyards littered with the bodies of hanged dogs, interiors are cramped labyrinthine spaces, animals and humans live in close proximity, and chamber-pots are emptied over garden walls. When Heathcliff visits the dead Cathy at Thrushcross Grange, he falls upon her body in a scene that is highly suggestive of necrophilia, a traumatic moment later reinforced when he attempts to disinter Cathy’s body from her grave.

Arnold’s is not the only version of the film to question the book’s appropriation as a heritage text. Jacques Rivette’s *Hurlevent* (1985) locates the narrative in France and substitutes the moors for the liminal spaces of the coast. However, in deviating from the aesthetic conventions of heritage cinema, Arnold not only returns to the

original elemental modality of the source text, but she also re-presents the nineteenth-century world through the lens of contemporary concerns with social deprivation, exclusion, and marginalisation, thus also returning to key themes in her earlier work. Rather than a re-working of the familiar tropes of costume/period drama, the film imbricates a period authenticity with a portrayal of harsh, impoverished domesticity, the struggles of everyday life, and the conflict with abusive figures of authority. Through the use of expletive-strewn language, abusive families, and a documentary visual style incorporating hand-held camerawork, Arnold's version disturbs the notions of home and nation space which characterises heritage cinema (Higson, 2003). In addition, Hindley's treatment of Heathcliff becomes explicitly racist and points to a colonial past that is often overlooked within other versions of the film and the casting of a black actor as Heathcliff makes explicit a post-colonial reading of the film.

To extend the themes of her previous work, the constraining socio-economic conditions in which Cathy and Heathcliff exist are redolent of the social-housing estates, streetwise protagonists, and fractured familial structures that dominate films such as *Dog*, *Wasp*, *Red Road* and *Fish Tank*. Bradshaw for example claims that the look and feel of the film is "social-realist year zero" (2011: n.p.) with Arnold's depiction of the moors being "desentimentalised so deliberately that it could be urban, the crags and fields could as well be concrete walkways" (Bradshaw, 2011: n.p.). Or as Gilbey points out, "*Wuthering Heights* forsakes Arnold's beloved housing estates altogether – though even the most forbidding of these would resemble Paris in springtime next to the rain-lashed moors near the Pennine Way where Arnold filmed her adaptation" (2011: n.p.). Thus, by rejecting the signifiers of heritage cinema, Arnold ruptures the novel's cinematic and cultural afterlife, providing a

“sustained critical investigation of marginalised histories and awareness of how the present is shaped by historical legacies” (Shachar, 2012: 199).

The notion of a connected nation-space as depicted in heritage films is thus subverted. Instead, the film focuses on the poverty and the violence extant in small communal spaces and sites. The landscape in Arnold's version is, to use Mathieson's phrase, “a reminder of the pain and suffering that has been forged through that space [and a marker of] the hidden pain that lingers under the pleasant surface of rural life” (2015: 41). The brutality executed by Hindley, both upon Heathcliff and upon the animals, reflects similar acts of violence in *Dog*, or Mia's attempted drowning of Conor's daughter in *Fish Tank*. Arnold therefore exposes the counter-narratives of heritage cinema, as well as Heathcliff's own cinematic lineage, to illustrate the constellations of mobility in which these elements of the past can be found residually in contemporary depictions of landscape.

The decision to take on a text weighed down heavily with a deep cultural afterlife continues Arnold's avowed intention to encourage audiences to see things anew. Whilst her earlier films questioned existing representations of social realist spaces, so her version of *Wuthering Heights* is a rejection of the moors and nation-space as heritage idyll. As opposed to landscape which performs a decorative function, walking journeys imbue the moors with a tactile urgency that recalls the edgeland and urban spaces of Arnold's other films, and so, instead of the moors as a heritage site, the relationship between the landscape and embodied mobility offers “a distinct alternative form of national understanding” (Mathieson, 2015: 27). Her interpretation of the story is thus part of an ongoing dialogue between the novel and its cultural afterlife, rooting space and mobility within a contemporary discourse of marginalised space. Walking journeys therefore provide narrative and ideological

space to counter the cultural myth-making that has formed part of the novel's afterlife and consequently help to reject the novel's heritage associations. Arnold defamiliarises the moors, reclaiming them through an embodied mobility to present a different form of nation space which depicts walking journeys as sites of defiance and self-preservation, and creating spaces where "new ideas about the relationship between space and the self are forged" (Mathieson, 2015: 30). In doing so, Arnold positions Cathy and Heathcliff alongside the disenfranchised walkers of nineteenth-century fiction identified by Bredar (2017) and Mathieson (2015), and which are discussed in the introduction to this thesis.

Walking and Absorption

In adoptions such as those by Wyler and Kosminsky, walking is relegated to its functionality within the narrative. For this reason, Arnold's version is singular in its articulation of the walking chronotope, differing from previous versions through its immersion into the physical world of its characters. The depiction of the hilltop scenes exemplifies Arnold's departure from previous iterations. Whereas in previous versions, Heathcliff leads Cathy to the hilltop, in her version the roles are reversed: in the first scene, he adopts the position of a timorous ingénue, and in the second he is a submissive returnee.

The earlier hilltop scene occurs just after Heathcliff wakes up to his first morning at the Heights. A wide, establishing shot of the moors, bathed in early morning sunlight, cuts to an image of the farmhouse from which Heathcliff emerges in long-shot, his body almost imperceptible against the walls of the house. He hesitates, as if uncertain of the parameters of his new world. The next image, taken over Heathcliff's blurred right shoulder, shows Cathy in long-shot sitting on a dry-

stone wall. The camera's restless framing, hovering from right to left, suggests Heathcliff's continuing uncertainty with himself and his situation. A series of shot-reverse-shots culminates in Heathcliff looking up into the flare of the sun, closing his eyes as the image shifts in and out of focus. After being barged out of the way by a mounted and irascible Hindley, a close-up of Cathy's muddy boots comes into focus. Her movement from stone wall to muddy ground imbricates her directly with nature.

As they make their way towards the moors on horseback, Cathy's slow caress of the horse foregrounds the scene's haptic visuality (also echoing Arnold's visual depiction of Mia's encounter with the horse in *Fish Tank*). Heathcliff sits behind Cathy, and close-ups of their heads and torsos cut to Heathcliff's hands caressing the flanks of the horse, a repeat of Cathy's gesture just moments before. Likewise, a close-up of Cathy's hair from Heathcliff's point of view blurs in and out of focus, and as he moves forward to take in its scent, his eyes close in sensory delight. Here the film language reinforces their physical intimacy and reiterates the importance of touch as part of the sensory experience of the film. The proximity of the camera in this wordless sequence, combined with the ambient soundtrack of the breathing horse, birdsong, and the soft tread of hooves on grass, all add to the sense of absorption, of being with the characters in their world. Both Cathy and Heathcliff are intimately connected in the cinematic frame which repeatedly blurs them together, further compounding their interchangeable fluidity.

When Cathy dismounts and leads the way to the top of the crag, Heathcliff follows, the hand-held camera behind capturing his uncertain progress as he walks up the hill, before cutting to a close-up of his feet treading through the heather. The camera then tilts up to reveal an over-the-shoulder shot of Cathy as she reaches the top of the crag, the space in the frame overwhelmed by huge boulders, the colour of

which perfectly matches that of Heathcliff's coat, binding him again to the landscape. Similarly, we see Cathy in an over-the-shoulder shot from Heathcliff's perspective. Her costume of grey and brown also links her to the landscape, as if she is melded with it: space here is not something to transcend, it is part of the fabric of life.

As the scene continues, the camera follows Heathcliff to the top in a tight shot, and once at the summit, it cuts to a close-up of Cathy. Her head fills the screen and is partly silhouetted by the setting sun which frames her windswept hair. Heathcliff's admiration of his new companion is suggested by the explosion of light as the sun flares in the screen. The shot is held for seven seconds before cutting back to a close-up of the awe-struck Heathcliff, his face bathed in the sun's rays just as he bathes in Cathy's presence. The sequence of close-up shots prioritises character over landscape for a few moments, drawing attention to the intense connection between the two characters. However, whilst Cathy is looked at by Heathcliff, she is not objectified by the camera: although powerful natural light floods the frame, the brevity of the edit and the partial concealment of her face by her hair prevents her becoming so.

At the top of the crag, Arnold eschews the conventional film grammar employed by previous filmmakers which presents landscape-as-spectacle. Rather than the 'hilltop lovers' image that dominates other versions, Arnold invests in the character's sensory experiences. Firstly, the camera cuts to a position behind Cathy and Heathcliff as they lie prostrate on the rocks, occupying the lower half of the screen in a shot that lasts for seven seconds. The moorland stretches out before them, and their grey and brown clothing binds them to the landscape as if they are camouflaged and secret. The next cut to a wider shot of the vista before them finally reveals the landscape's natural beauty. Instead of a reaction shot, the camera

remains on the wide shot of the characters' bodies merging into the earth. The editing of the sequence does not permit them to possess the space before them as in previous film versions: instead, they are part of it. In this way, spectacle is bound up with the sensory experience, locating Cathy and Heathcliff within their milieu rather than gifting it to them as visual excess by way of an eyeline match.²⁷

This hilltop scene eschews the frontal two-shot deployed by Wyler which places Cathy and Heathcliff against the landscape and the sky "with all its connotations of eternity and transcendence" (Shachar, 2012: 41). Instead, long-shots of the landscape combine with more intimate, corporeal imagery that positions the spectator within the immediate physical space of the characters rather than observing them at a distance. Apart from Cathy's initial exhortation to Heathcliff to follow her up the hill, the whole sequence is wordless, and the soundtrack contains only ambient sounds: the wind, the sound of the grass beneath feet, and the rustle of clothing. The lack of non-diegetic sound and dialogue strips away the elements of

²⁷ Arnold's depiction of Cathy and Heathcliff atop the moors, with the landscape stretched out before them, is reminiscent of the iconography of the *Rückenfigur* evident in the work of Romantic painters such as Caspar David Friedrich (see for example *Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer*, 1818). According to Ian Waites, the *Rückenfigur* "was specifically derived to describe the solitary contemplative depicted looking at a landscape with his or her back to the viewer of the painting" (2009, n.p.). This position therefore invites the spectator to ruminate on the beauty of nature, and to share its intimacy. However, the position of the *Rückenfigur*, often atop a craggy precipice, also suggests the subject's superiority over the vista that spreads out before them (Waites, 2009).

Romanticism that accompany previous iterations of these scenes; instead the emphasis is upon embodied movement and a heightened consciousness of the characters' positions in space. Walking as a corporeal, embodied process is reinforced through the sensory appeal of this scene, but it also reinforces the notion of walking as providing tactical subversions which stimulate new discoveries (see the discussion of de Certeau in the introduction to this thesis).

The scene is replicated later in the film, although there is a separateness to the older characters that is missing in the earlier scenes. As will be discussed later in this chapter, this separation characterises Cathy and Heathcliff's walking in the latter part of the film, emphasising the restrictions placed upon their adult bodies by cultural and social mores. In this later sequence, Heathcliff and Cathy are accompanied by Isabella (Nichola Burley) on their journey to the moors, but rather than together on horseback, each character rides individually. A long-shot, taken from the top of the hill, follows the group as they proceed from left to right of the frame. Heathcliff and Cathy are almost indiscernible, whilst Isabella's white horse enables her to stand out from the background.

Again, Heathcliff and Cathy climb to the top of the same crag, but this time their ascent, as Heathcliff gazes up towards Cathy, is filmed in long-shot from his perspective, once more emphasising the growing emotional distance between the two. A cut to the grey sky is accompanied by a sound bridge of the younger Cathy singing followed by an image of the younger Heathcliff's face in close-up as he lies on the ground, his hands behind his head and appearing completely content. The next edit is a cut-away to a wider shot of the two: the prostrate Heathcliff is in the foreground and Cathy, her hair blowing in the wind, is facing away from the camera. Further cuts to closer images of first Heathcliff and then Cathy, still from behind, are

concluded with a second shot of the grey leaden sky rather than the landscape beyond, once again subverting the usual grammar of this scene as noted above. Throughout this sequence, Cathy's singing voice is accompanied by the sound of the wind and the whole scene creates a temporal discontinuity which disturbs the hitherto conventional narrative structure, pointing to a disruption in the relationship between the two characters and a sense of loss for the past.

This scene's function as a temporal break is reinforced by the repeated image of the sky and the subsequent cut to the older Cathy, her head framed in an almost identical position to that of her younger self. The close-up is held for 20 seconds, her hair blown by the wind. She is restless, looking first one way then another before she fixes her gaze off screen towards Heathcliff. Their separation is reinforced by these edits, their isolation further enhanced in the next shot which is slightly wider and depicts Heathcliff in the foreground whilst Cathy sits on a craggy rock which divides the cinematic space between them. Her reprimand to Heathcliff ("How could you have left this? How could you have left me?") further reinforces the theme of separation. The sudden cut to a wide two-shot shows Cathy cross the frame to step on Heathcliff's head with her booted foot. Whilst Heathcliff's physical position in relation to Cathy in both these scenes endows her with power and agency, this latter scene compounds his subordination to Cathy. His mute acceptance of her punishment for his perceived betrayal is also a relinquishing of his subjectivity, and the violence afforded to Heathcliff by Cathy melds him to the earth beneath their feet.

Walking and Elemental Modality

This symbolic connection between Heathcliff and nature is prevalent throughout the film. On many occasions, he sleeps outdoors, and on others, he appears to emerge

from the landscape, thus dissolving the boundaries between inside and out. By encouraging spectatorial engagement with Heathcliff (Antunes, 2015), Arnold thus creates a space for a mutual sensory experience of pain and of pleasure, and of exclusion and otherness.

The opening scene, depicting Heathcliff and Mr. Earnshaw (Paul Hilton) walking towards the Heights, demonstrates this perfectly. Following a short pre-credits sequence, there is a cut to a darkened, blurred, and thus indistinct, close-up of long grass taken from a low angle. This shot is held for almost 16 seconds as the camera moves forward at ground level, as if from the point-of-view of an animal. A cut to a close-up of a hooded Heathcliff, again barely discernible in the low natural lighting, heightens the eerie quality of the scene, one that is reinforced by the mist that rests on the moors and by the harsh cry of the birds. His walk continues for 64 seconds before he is joined by Earnshaw who is silhouetted against the evening sky.

The editing in this opening sequence is effective in intensifying the elemental modality of Heathcliff's walk. The cut from a low-level shot in the grass to the wider image of the fields gives the impression that Heathcliff has emerged from the earth itself. Subsequent shots of the sky, puddles of rainwater, and finally the house on the horizon, combine to bind him to the elements. In contrast to these open spaces, the scene ends with Heathcliff stepping over the threshold into the farmhouse where the clutter of the entrance combines with the boxed aspect ratio of Arnold's frame to reinforce Heathcliff's confinement. As with Mia in the opening scene in *Fish Tank*, this topography circumscribes the extent of his world: the space of Heathcliff's existence is mapped out within this night-time walk, with the point of light in the window pointing out the direction of his future.

Immersion into the world is enhanced by the ambient noise which is amplified throughout this opening sequence. In addition to the sound of birds, there is the swish of bodies through grass, the beating of the wind and the rain, feet splashing in puddles, and dogs barking. Ryan's signature cinematographic style, shaky, hand-held, and up-close, is maintained throughout the walk, with the shot often blurring in and out of focus, and, towards the end of this sequence, these disparate elements combine to create a sense of confusion. The baffled vision of this haptic experience (Marks, 2000) alienates the spectator from the cinematic world and engages them mimetically with Heathcliff's own spatial confusion.

The inextricableness of their relationship makes it necessary to consider Cathy's walking alongside that of Heathcliff. Walking is something they do together, offering an escape from the restrictions placed on their lives as well as their relationship, and thus opening up a space for them to forge friendship. His is a connection with the earth that is shared by Cathy, and their early scenes on the moors enhance their symbiosis with the sense of elements. Indeed, most of these scenes occur alongside sequences in which a *mise-en-scène* of confinement dominates. One such scene takes place just after Hindley departs the farm to receive an education. Filmed from Heathcliff's perspective, the sequence begins with a shot of Hindley in the doorway, framed in a rectangle of light. This is in contrast to the darkness in which Heathcliff stands which exacerbates the impression of entrapment. A subsequent shot to two buzzards swooping across the sky is watched by a half-smiling and reflective Heathcliff, this image of freedom acting as a signifier of his release from Hindley's bullying. The subsequent eye-line match reveals two dogs chasing each other across the muddy farmyard, perhaps another symbol of the conflict between the two young men, before cutting again to a large formation of

birds high in the sky. The structural movement of this montage, from the air to the ground and back again, contrasts the potential violence of the farm with the open spaces of the sky.

This sense of freedom is reinforced in the next scene in which Cathy and Heathcliff walk across the mudflats on the moors. It is a sequence charged with pubescent desire and raw physicality, one in which they cross the threshold from innocence into the experience of physical desire. It begins with a high angle of Cathy and Heathcliff as they make their way across the muddy, swamp-like fields. Although Cathy once again leads the way, the editing of this sequence puts Heathcliff in control of the gaze, with high angles of Cathy on the ground, shot from Heathcliff's perspective, as they grapple together. When he pins her down, the melding of bodies to the soil is emphasised in a quick montage that depicts close-up shots of their hands clasped together in the mud, and their booted feet pressing into the sodden ground. At one point, Heathcliff pushes Cathy's face into the earth. Concluding with a seven-second shot of moss-covered bracken, over which can be heard Heathcliff and Cathy breathing, the scene epitomises the moors as a heterotopic site of play and fantasy.

The mud-fight, which begins as child-like play, transforms first into one of physical sensuality and then into a playful struggle for dominance and submission, a motif present throughout the film. Heathcliff's pressing of a cake of mud into Cathy's face connects both explicitly to an elemental modality (echoing also a later incident when Cathy grinds Heathcliff's head into the ground). The scene is intimate but also hints at the latent and suppressed violence within their relationship. The physical intensity of this moment is reinforced by the very brief insert from a later scene which shows an extreme close-up of Cathy kissing the wounds inflicted upon Heathcliff by

Joseph and Hindley. This example of elemental physicality firmly situates both characters within the earth. It is primal and almost savage, foreshadowing Heathcliff's later post-mortem embrace of Cathy, as well as his furious attempt to disinter her from the grave, whilst highlighting the fragility of borders between play and violence.²⁸

Walking and the Moors as Heterotopia

The fragile borders between play and violence are indicative of the liminal qualities of the moors and I argue that Arnold presents them as a fantasy heterotopia. This form of heterotopia, for Foucault, can be found in

the bottom of the garden; [or] ... the Indian tent erected in the middle of the attic; or still, it's ... on their parent's bed where they discover the ocean, as they can swim between the covers, and the bed is also the sky, or they can bounce on the springs; it's the forest as they can hide there; or still, it's night as they can become ghosts between the sheets and, finally, it's the fear and delight of their parents coming home. (Foucault, 2010, translated in Johnson, 2016)

This describes aptly the natural landscape as experienced by Heathcliff and Cathy, for whom the moors are primarily an escape zone, and a place which they can appropriate and inscribe with their own narratives. For example, in other walking

²⁸ Whilst the mud-fight returns both Heathcliff and Cathy to the earth, their natural milieu, it would be simplistic, as Thornham suggests, to identify within these mutable borders and the predominance of dirt, blood and violence in the film, the embodiment of abjection: "Rather, in the film they constitute an insistent presence beneath, or within, the ordered framing which is our more usual mode of viewing landscape. They are the material – visceral, multiple, in constant movement – out of which the countries – territories – of the symbolic are made" (2016a: 224).

scenes, the younger Cathy is frequently heard singing and skipping along, or else she teases Heathcliff's taste and sight. In one sequence, Cathy asks Heathcliff to close his eyes, and the actor's hands cover the camera to replicate the boy's gaze as he watches her hands come towards him.



Figure 22: Cathy and Heathcliff as part of the landscape (*Wuthering Heights*, Andrea Arnold: 2011).

The notion of play as a form of escape is reinforced elsewhere in the film. In one incident, as they return to the farmhouse after their mud fight, the two children are captured in a long-shot as they walk from right-to-left of the screen, with Ryan's camera slowly re-framing them to reveal the wider expanse of the farm as well as a solitary cow grazing in the field (see figure 22). The obscuring mist, grey skies, and accompanying silence combine to reinforce the oneiric quality of the image, and to once again connect the characters to the landscape. Earnshaw's off-screen cough creates a sound bridge between this image and a hand-held close-up which is

behind Heathcliff and Cathy as they walk through the gate. This ten-second shot is one of the few in the film that depicts their walking from such a distance (similar to the singular moments in *Fish Tank* and *Red Road*, described above), with Arnold's eschewing of close-ups an implication that both characters have crossed a physical and emotional threshold.

Upon seeing Cathy, Earnshaw admonishes her by saying, "How can I love you, when I regret the day that you were born?" This is followed by a hint of parental common sense as he instructs them to take off their muddy clothes. His parting shot, in which calls out "and ask God to forgive you both" may well be his own recognition of their transformation into physical and possibly sexual knowing, and the subsequent scene, in which Cathy and Heathcliff undress each other, is charged with this newfound understanding. Close-ups of Heathcliff unbuttoning Cathy's outer garments, and her letting them fall to the ground to reveal her bare feet, are accompanied by mid-shots of his naked torso. When he dries Cathy's hair, close-ups of his face show his absolute attention to the task, and as Cathy glances to the left of the frame, the cut to a golden moth fluttering against the windowpane symbolises their sense of confinement. However, just as the moth is drawn to the light beyond, so the two children are drawn to each other and to the freedom of the world outside. The final shot of this scene which depicts the grey skies, dark hills, and a silver ribbon of water beyond the room is framed inside a barred window to emphasise the ambiguity of their experience. Once again, the themes of escape and confinement are presented alongside recurring images of borders and boundaries, reinforcing the threshold chronotope.

Walking and Threshold Chronotopes

Despite the urban settings of her previous films, the intrinsic connection between Arnold's characters and nature is a dominant trope in her work, indicating the fragility between borders and the arbitrary separation of urban, bucolic, and edgeland space. This is continued in *Wuthering Heights*, thus continuing to exemplify Bakhtin's threshold chronotope, in particular through visual references to doorways and windows. Furthermore, the fragility of borders and boundaries is emphasised, with windows serving as partitions between the natural and the human world. This is often exemplified by images of small creatures against windowpanes: wasps and moths, for example, and in the opening to *Wuthering Heights*, the repeated image of the branch knocking at the windowpane echoes these events.

The threshold chronotope is reinforced by numerous scenes depicting characters looking through windows, again a reminder of similar moments in previous films. Waking up after his first night at the farm, Heathcliff is filmed in a mid-shot as he looks out of the window. An eye-line match reveals the emptiness of the moors beyond, but his view is obstructed by the bars in the windowpanes and the branches of nearby trees. This duality of freedom and confinement is matched in the lighting and composition of the shot: the left side of Heathcliff's face is lit by the weak sunlight, implying a sense of hope and imminent freedom, with the wistful expression on his face an indicator of his curiosity about his new home. His position in the window echoes his predecessors, Zoe, Jackie, and Mia, who all began their journeys with the look out of a window. Like them, he looks out on to the landscape beyond, and like them he eventually moves into this space, crossing the threshold between longing and belonging.

Just as female walking is linked with crossing thresholds and “the clandestine” evasion of Foucauldian disciplines of the body (Bredar, 2017: 120), so Heathcliff uses walking as a means of self-preservation and defiance of numerous authoritative figures and institutions. As a boy, he walks to reject his baptism and, by extension, the church; later on, he takes off with Cathy to the moors to evade work, prompting a brutal punishment from Joseph; and, following his perceived rejection by Cathy, he flees the misery of the Heights. When he returns to the farm as a man, walking signifies another form of defiance, this time in the form of his rejection of a life of cruelty at the hands of Hindley, but it also marks his transformation into a man of means.

The geographical site that is Wuthering Heights functions as a liminal space in the narrative and straddles numerous articulations of reality. As noted, the novel’s spectral Cathy breaks through the windowpane to grasp at Lockwood, thus collapsing the fragile border between death and life. In addition, various incarnations of Earnshaws, Heathcliffs, and Lintons swap places between Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights, exemplifying the fluidity of identity as well as the porosity of place. Heathcliff himself epitomises the notion of an intrusive other that comes to take the place of first Hindley Earnshaw, and then Edgar Linton. This porosity is a key element in Arnold’s version of the film which repeatedly dissolves the borders between animal and human. Spaces of home are disrupted and subverted, and the boundaries between inside and outside are blurred, for example when Heathcliff watches on as Frances (Amy Wren) has sex with Hindley in a field, or later on Frances gives birth outdoors. In addition to the dissolving of these physical boundaries, both time and space within the film operate as reflections of each other. As Thornham argues:

Arnold's teeming, borderless landscape, with its abundance of lives and deaths glimpsed vividly for a moment, is ... a space of multiple narratives, in which our sense of time as well as of space is disrupted. The film's two presents are frequently intercut, to create a sense not of flashback or flash-forward so much as of multiple temporalities. (2016a: 225)

Walking therefore becomes a means by which the dissolution of borders and the crossing of thresholds is experienced tangibly. In a narrative sense, they provide places for fantasy and escape, but there is also 'play' in a different sense which lies in the temporal unfixing evident in Arnold's cutting between past, present, and future events.

The porosity of chronological time is evidenced in several scenes, and the second hilltop scene described above is one such example where flashbacks are used. The breakdown of narrative chronology is a reminder of the temporal importance of the chronotope where time thresholds are crossed to illustrate the fragmentation of memory and desire. This is further exemplified when the older Heathcliff returns to Thrushcross Grange. A brief close-up of the back of young Heathcliff's head cuts to a front mid-shot of his adult self as he proceeds through the hall towards the sitting room. Later in the film, when Heathcliff calls again at the Grange, Nelly exhorts Cathy not to run which triggers another temporal slippage, this time a flashback in which the younger Heathcliff and Cathy scamper over the moors. In this 12 second burst of frenetic energy, the hand-held camera follows closely behind the young Heathcliff as Cathy runs on ahead. There is no dialogue, only the sound of the wind which then gives way to the rustling of feet through the long grass. Once more, Arnold draws attention to the sensory detail of her characters' mobility, and the reflective, oneiric qualities of the flashback present the moors as heterotopia, and walking as a flight of fantasy.

This temporal fluidity becomes intrinsic to the chronotopicity in the film. In scenes in which the editing jars against the smooth rhythms of the narrative, the spectator becomes conscious of the gaps in both space and time. Such scenes occur only on a few occasions in the film, but they contribute to the otherness of the landscape, and disturb any unified consciousness that the text attempts to portray. In this way, the film mirrors the gaps in time/space evident in Brontë's text. As Nestor observes of the novel, the "realm of the Heights and Thrushcross Grange functions as a world unto itself, an exclusive reality for the text, so that when the characters do leave that world, as Heathcliff and Isabella do, they seem to mysteriously disappear into a void" (2003: xix).

A cinematic rendering of this void is exemplified in the scene which shows Heathcliff's return to the Heights after a long period in exile. His flight from the farm occurs following his overhearing of Cathy's confession to Nelly (Simone Jackson) that she is to marry Edgar (James Northcote). After gathering a few meagre belongings, he slips away into the darkness, and walks away into the night. He is tracked from left to right as he walks past the farmhouse, and then, after a cut to a mid-shot from behind Heathcliff, the camera remains static as he disappears into the darkness (this sequence of shots will be replicated in *American Honey* when Star leaves to join the travelling magazine crew). On the soundtrack, Cathy's voice can be heard crying out Heathcliff's name, but this is drowned out by the sound of heavy rain. Not for the first, or the last, time in the film, Heathcliff is both exposed to, and at one with, the elements.

The night-time shot is held for several seconds before cutting suddenly to a wide shot of a misty moorland in daylight. This time there is almost complete silence, broken only by the sporadic bleating of sheep. The camera lingers for almost 18

seconds before the initially indiscernible figure of Heathcliff emerges from the horizon, occupying the same position in the frame into which his younger self had disappeared only moments before. Looking to his left and to his right, Heathcliff proceeds directly towards the camera, at times falteringly, as if conscious of his step, whilst wisps of mist float across the screen. This walk continues for 64 seconds and, as he approaches the centre of the image, his walk angles towards the bottom right of the frame. The older Heathcliff is now divested of the rags he wore when he ran away from the Heights, and is now wearing a dark overcoat, a shirt, and cravat; over his shoulder, he is carrying a brown leather bag. His costume tells a story of changed fortunes. His walk continues over into the next shot which cuts to a perspective of the farmhouse from behind him, the camera following him up the hill towards the Heights for a further 16 seconds.

Lefebvre refers to intentional landscapes as those which “appear during lulls in the story (*temps morts*); or they appear in moments free of any diegetic motivation” (2006a: 38), inviting a reflective mode of viewing. This is apparent in this sequence, for whilst the spectator’s gaze lingers upon the landscape, it is not until Heathcliff appears in the frame that the shot takes on narrative significance. The long duration of the shot is also suggestive of what Flanagan (2008, 2012) refers to as “slow cinema” (see the introduction to this thesis). Once again, walking scenes combine the impetus of narrative cinema with the aesthetic of less mainstream work. In this sequence, the extended shot’s temporal duration draws attention to its otherness through its emphasis on a contemplative, sensory mode of looking. Heathcliff’s emergence from the horizon, as if from the earth, or the “void” to which Nestor refers (2003: xix), carries connotations of rebirth, and this, alongside Heathcliff’s costume, signifies his new identity and new-found wealth. It is clear that

this walk comes at the end of a longer metaphorical journey, one in which Heathcliff's fortunes and circumstances have changed significantly. This is the longest walking sequence in the film, but the play of time, along with the ethereal qualities of Heathcliff's oneness with the landscape, invites the audience to reflect on walking journeys as occupying heterotopic space and time.

Heathcliff's return to the Heights echoes his first journey, but on this occasion it takes place in daylight, and the film language bestows upon him more control over the landscape. In the opening sequence, Heathcliff is submerged beneath a world of darkness, isolation, and alienation. In the later scene, an eye-line match between the older Heathcliff and the house connects him inextricably to the farm and to its history. Furthermore, rather than the stumbling boy, Heathcliff's walking is now more purposeful. Interestingly, his faltering negotiation of the thick mud outside the cottage not only signifies a changed man, but also an alteration in the relationship of walking to the landscape: from immersing himself in the mud-pits with Cathy, mud is now a potential barrier, even threatening to spoil his boots.

This sequence, narratively and aesthetically, encapsulates May Adadol Ingawanij's notion of the heterotopia as "a concrete space that suspends the flow of everyday time and encompasses a movement across a threshold into an elsewhere" (2017: 429). The elliptical cut which elides three years of Heathcliff's life is a pivotal moment in the narrative, occurring almost half-way through the film, and shows him transformed from poor boy to rich man. Structurally, the walk provides the hinge connecting the two halves of the film, with Heathcliff crossing narrative, temporal, and spatial thresholds, with walking functioning as a site of escape and of memory.

Walking as Escape

Just as walking in Arnold's previous films facilitates a wider sense of independence amongst her protagonists, in *Wuthering Heights* walking is central to both Cathy and Heathcliff's physical liberty, creating an alternative space of freedom which exists apart from their domestic lives. Such images of confinement and escape occur throughout the film. An example of this follows one of Cathy and Heathcliff's walks on the moors when a montage of three shots is presented which consist of a series of words and images etched into the walls and furniture (see figure 22).



Figure 23: mapping the parameters of space (*Wuthering Heights*, Andrea Arnold: 2011).

The first image shows the names of Catherine and Heathcliff scratched into a wooden ledge, and the second reveal the initials 'CE' alongside a drawing of a lapwing. Finally, the third is a child's drawing of a house, with a path snaking from its front door towards a gate to which a horse is tethered. Within these three images lies a crystallisation of the themes of nature, freedom, and confinement that are so

central to the film, with the roughly scribed names of Catherine and Heathcliff suggesting that their identities are connected and fossilised as a physical, tangible object of memory. The drawing of the house also binds them to the simple reality of their lives: the path, gate, and the horse in one way mark out the boundaries of their existence, and they, like the horse, are tethered to their little world at the Heights. However, in another, these chronotopes of roads and borders point to another threshold, one that fills the spaces beyond with an imagined freedom.

The children's refusal to comply with social norms and patriarchal structures is illustrated in a very early scene when Heathcliff flees from his enforced baptism. The sequence begins with an image of a tree filling the frame, its wintry branches swaying in the wind against a grey sky. This is followed by a shot of the church's roof and bell-tower, with the bell's erratic rings barely heard over the sound of the wind. This time-image condenses the religious significance of the scene with the tree, a symbol of life and knowledge, rooted in the natural world, whilst the bell signifies human architecture. In this image then, the built environment and nature co-exist, uncomfortably, within the institution of religion.

The preacher reads from Ezekiel 36:24 which describes the conversion and cleansing of the filthy heathen whilst Heathcliff, standing alone, becomes the focal point for the gathered congregation. Heathcliff is unable to comprehend this ritual, and the struggle to guide him to the font and submerge him in the water is filmed hand-held to capture the chaotic attempts to do so. He runs from the church and out into the rain, the camera following in hand-held close-up before cutting to a shot of Heathcliff leaping over a stone wall. He is quickly followed by Cathy, and her collusion is confirmed when she encourages Heathcliff to follow her to the top of the hill. As is the case in all walking scenes in the film, Cathy leads the way, a contrast to

previous versions of the film where Heathcliff is dominant. Following them up the hill, the film slows down almost imperceptibly before cutting to a shot in front of the two children as they walk towards the camera. The composition of this shot illustrates the geometric separation that exists between the two children and the church behind them: two stone walls cut horizontally across the frame either side of the austere, grey stone building, enclosing and isolating the church within a small band of grass, whilst the two children run free over the moors.

Sound is utilised in this walking scene to mark out the differences between the two children and the world they have, momentarily, left behind. The voices of the congregation cut to Cathy's own singing as she skips along in front of Heathcliff. Her voice is foregrounded in the mix, another acoustic close-up which, combined with the floating camerawork and the thick mist, lends the scene an ethereal quality. She skips along the heath, followed by the camera for several seconds, and watched by Heathcliff. In the subsequent close-up, Cathy holds out a feather to him, an offering and an invitation to friendship, whilst the bread she places in his mouth acquires religious connotations in the light of the previous scene in the church, with Cathy effectively replacing one initiation rite for another.

Upon their return to the farmhouse, the soundtrack becomes more raucous: dogs barking, the bleating of sheep in the distance, the splashing of water and grating of metal tubs, as well as Joseph calling Cathy and Heathcliff "heathens". The camera follows both children as they walk into the house, their bodies framed tightly within doorways. Once more, the freedom enjoyed by their walking journeys is replaced by the confines of domestic space. In this instance, the editing becomes more rapid, adding to the sense of urgency, and underscoring the violence on screen as they are subsequently beaten by Earnshaw who exclaims "God forgive you both".

This sequence is further evidence of the temporary freedom afforded by walking. Here, the children's walking is bookended by scenes depicting oppressive patriarchal institutions, symbolised by the church and the family, or indeed the church and the church since Earnshaw's admonition mimics the language of religion. Even though walking provides a moment of liberty and an opportunity for self-discovery, exemplified through the joy of Cathy's singing, and the gratification that Heathcliff takes from the bread that she places in his mouth, this pleasure and freedom are transient. For Cathy and for Heathcliff, their journey across the moors merely foregrounds the limitations of this freedom and marks them out as transgressive bodies that must be punished.

Walking on the moors also enables Cathy and Heathcliff to disengage themselves from the strictures and responsibilities of everyday life, including the hard labour of building a wall that Heathcliff is required to do to earn the roof over his head. A long-shot of one of Cathy's dresses hanging out on the line to dry is followed by the reverse shot of Heathcliff gazing in its direction. As he sets about his work, Cathy's voice is heard off screen calling his name. The cut to her as she clammers over a gate is followed by a shot of the equally eager Heathcliff jumping over the wall to run towards her, with Joseph's curses ringing out. Cathy and Heathcliff are matched through their actions, with walls and gates becoming porous boundaries that the two are determined to break through.

As before, these scenes of friendship and sensory immersion are followed by forms of violence. In the walk that follows, Cathy gives Heathcliff a morsel of bread and remarks that he eats "like a pig". She punches him playfully on the arm, but he grabs her wrist. For several seconds the shot is held in close-up on Cathy's face, alive with desire and curiosity, before she grabs a tuft of Heathcliff's hair, pulls it from

his head, and lets it drift in the breeze. A match-cut to a lapwing's feather similarly drifting in the sky explicitly links Heathcliff to Cathy: not only is the lapwing Cathy's favourite bird, but with its black and white demarcations it symbolises her relationship with Heathcliff. Another small creature, this time a close-up of a butterfly settled on the stone wall, combines beauty with the steadfast coldness of the earth. However, this image is overlaid with the sound of painful groans and anxious voices, Cathy's remonstrations, the sound of the barking dogs, and the whinnying horses all contribute to the disorienting atmosphere as Heathcliff is punished for his transgression of avoiding work. This visual condensation of the tensions between the heterotopic otherness of the moors and the brutality of domestic life is apt here. However, Arnold does not allow the symbolism of this montage to become trite and clichéd. Instead, the use of editing and sound-bridges foregrounds the intrinsic porosity of narrative and cinematic space: the children's joy is transient and illusory and gives way rapidly to the brutality of the reality within which they exist.

For Mathieson, walking in nineteenth-century texts provides "moments of rupture between the stabilities of home-places" (2015: 47). In *Wuthering Heights*, by contrast, the domestic sphere disrupts opportunities for emotional and psychological stability. Only in the act of walking on the moors do Cathy and Heathcliff find solace and relief. Cathy's defiance of her family along with her wayward excursions with Heathcliff exacerbates this fragile stability. Through walking journeys, Heathcliff and Cathy create heterotopic spaces of play and desire. Yet these are available to them only as children. Once they bow to social conventions and constraints, and pass into maturity, these heterotopias dissolve and their walking becomes imbued with control and constraint.

Walking, Confinement, and Surveillance

Walking for Heathcliff and Cathy enables defiance and freedom. However, as the narrative develops, Cathy's mobility becomes more distinct from that of Heathcliff, the symbiosis of their childhood walks ceding to notions of confinement and surveillance. The incident at Thrushcross Grange when Cathy is bitten by the Lintons' dog is a crucial moment in the narrative, one that re-defines her walking and transforms her from free-spirited youth to a woman trapped within a loveless marriage. Furthermore, her spatial shift from outside (the moors) to inside (Thrushcross Grange) is symbolically and structurally significant: constrained by her injuries to stay with the Lintons, she loses her main weapon of defiance which is her ability to walk to acquire independence.

As Gemma Lopez writes of this incident in the novel, Cathy's "childhood roaming will be abandoned, her savage ways will be forfeited, and she will be incorporated into the symbolic that the Lintons represent" (2007: 109). From this moment in the film, she does not walk as a child with Heathcliff again. Instead, as adults, their walking is constrained by secrecy and surveillance. Visually, Arnold represents this confinement in a number of ways. After being bitten by the Linton's dog, Cathy is tended to by Edgar and his family as Heathcliff watches on. In a long-shot from Heathcliff's point of view, Cathy is doubly trapped in concentric rectangles: both the window frame and the bars within the glass itself. Later, when she returns to Wuthering Heights from her stay at Thrushcross Grange, Heathcliff watches on as Cathy, framed by the rectangles of the door frame, dismounts from the horse and crosses the threshold. To add to Cathy's inaccessibility, she is hooded and barely identifiable as she enters the house, and her subsequent distaste at Heathcliff's unkempt state is an indicator of her own altered temperament. Through her

association with the Lintons, Cathy has assimilated some of the social graces expected of their class, and her observation of social convention contrasts with the freedom she enjoyed with Heathcliff in their journeys across the moors.

Social and physical restrictions are not limited to the older Cathy, however. As a young girl, her future horizons are already limited, with her social and geographical mobility extending no further than the boundaries of the Yorkshire Moors.

Throughout, Cathy's containment is emphasised repeatedly on screen by images of her looking out of windows or being framed through the rectangles and squares of architectural structures. Likewise, she sleeps in a small box-bed that appears no bigger than a space in which one would keep an animal. However, as the older Cathy, the presence of Isabella as a chaperone to her walks with Heathcliff adds a physical, as well as a psychological, constraint that limits her ability to communicate with Heathcliff in anything other than muted formalities. For example, in a later scene, when Heathcliff's confronts the dying Cathy, their embrace is juxtaposed with a shot of a bird in a cage, a metaphor for Cathy's confinement that was sealed, both emotionally and physically, from the moment that she was bitten by the Linton's dog.

Once Cathy and Heathcliff become adults, the restrictions on their walking journeys become more apparent. Heathcliff's first meeting with Cathy upon his return to Thrushcross Grange takes place in the garden. Filmed from behind, a hand-held camera captures his approach towards the house which can be seen over his left shoulder. Threshold chronotopes are again prominent: Heathcliff passes through a gate, and then observes Nelly through a doorway in a garden wall. The image is infused with light and colour, whilst the vibrant green of the leaves, and the blossom, combine with the sunlight to convey an impression of abundance and fertility. When Nelly leaves to inform Cathy of his visit, Heathcliff looks down to the ground, and the

camera moves in slowly on his sunlight-dappled face. The image blurs, and the film slows down to evoke a dream-like quality, with the anticipation of Cathy's entrance heightened by out of focus shots of apple blossom and fruit, further symbolising growth and beauty. For a few seconds, the sun flares in the lens, adding to the feeling of anticipation. The lighting, colour, and mood of the scene is in stark contrast to the earlier scenes at the Heights, and it is as though Heathcliff has entered a Paradise. However, the sight of the walls beyond imply that the garden, in the end, is just another place of confinement for Cathy.

As Cathy walks towards Heathcliff, she is framed by a latticework of tree-branches, rendering her almost invisible, before she enters a clearing. The sunlight creates a halo around her, and this, combined with the extended shots of Heathcliff's gaze and slowed-down action, create an oneiric effect that reminds us of their previous encounters on the moors, with the garden acquiring the heterotopic qualities of those wilder spaces. In fact, this 33-second sequence effectively creates a bridge between the heterotopic walking spaces of their childhood and the more enclosed journeys they will make as adults. Edgar's voice off-screen as he calls for his wife dispels the dream-like mood afforded this scene, and the expected reunion between the Cathy and Heathcliff is thus deferred.

As a young girl, Cathy's walking highlighted the instability of domestic order. Now, as an adult, the reverse is true. Edgar's insecurity at Heathcliff's presence is obvious in the scenes they share, and when Heathcliff calls on Cathy to accompany him on a walk, this insecurity is replicated in the film language as well as the behaviour of the characters. Upon opening the door to Heathcliff, Nellie questions him on the wisdom of continuing their friendship, and when Cathy goes back into the house to prepare for her walk, Nellie calls out "Cathy, don't run". This innocent

request is, as later discovered, aimed at protecting Cathy's health in the light of her early pregnancy, and Nellie's over-fussy response to her decision to walk is another form of control, this time with the perceived fragility of a woman's body determining her liberty.

Ignoring Isabella's awkward attempts at polite conversation, Heathcliff rises as Cathy descends the stairs. The re-framing of the shot brings Cathy in focus, the long-shot affording a view of most of her body. She stands out from the pale cream walls, in contrast to the darkened room in which Heathcliff and Isabella stand. Indeed, Isabella is marginalised in the frame, ignored and inconsequential. Even so, the *mise-en-scène* captures the inherent contradictions in walking as a process, for whilst Cathy anticipates a moment of freedom, she is visually restricted by the *mise-en-scène*, which is replete with horizontal lines of the stairs, the verticals and diagonals of the staircase, and the parallels within the pattern on the carpet. Confinement is also suggested by the dressing screens and drapes which, although folded back, imply the potential for concealment. Subtle exchanges of glances between Cathy and Heathcliff continue the air of repressed desire which is further enhanced by shots of Cathy putting on her boots from Heathcliff's point of view. By lifting her skirts to reveal her white stockinged legs, she at once shows her ease with Heathcliff's presence and is dismissive of, or unbothered by, the social mores which would prohibit such behaviour.

Just as, for Pidduck (1998), the women's gaze out of the windows of 1990s costume drama signified potential and proscription, for nineteenth-century novelists, Mathieson observes, walking provides a dual function for women: it enables temporary liberty, a sense of privacy away from domestic constraints, but it also reminds them of the limitations of their freedoms (2015: 30). In *Wuthering Heights*,

the image of Cathy's boots perform the same dual function. Whilst boots are vital attire for walking, Cathy's wearing of them provokes the suspicion and alarm of Nellie and then Edgar. The image also reveals the sartorial restrictions placed on woman's mobility through the volume of skirts and hosiery with which the nineteenth-century female pedestrian must contend. Indeed, the very process of lacing up her boots is another signifier of Cathy's confinement.

Independent walking journeys by women were seen as subversive acts and imbued with promiscuous connotations (Mathieson, 2015). Indeed, Mathieson reiterates the links between women walking and sexual promiscuity, and "in a period in which the boundaries between respectability and promiscuity were seemingly unstable, and perceived as potentially easily transgressed, even the most respectable women might run the risk of impropriety for walking alone" (2015: 29). This impropriety is as evident in rural walking as it is in urban journeys. Edgar's encouragement to Isabella to accompany the two walkers is not only indicative of his discomfort at the relationship between his wife and Heathcliff, but it is also, for him, a social necessity to ensure his wife's respectability is maintained.

Arnold also draws attention to the constraints faced by women during their excursions. Throughout this walking scene, Heathcliff and Cathy's attempt to talk with some intimacy is restricted by Isabella, and the *mise-en-scène* successfully captures the sense of confinement and frustration felt. A lattice work of branches fills the frame before the walkers enter the shot, almost completely obscured by the trees. As they proceed through the gardens, Isabella's dog gambols on in front. This is followed by a fluid mid-shot which reveals first Heathcliff, then Cathy, and finally Isabella in a slow pan. The character proxemics highlight Cathy's position between the past and the present, her forward mobility, in an existential sense, restricted by

the inertia brought about by her current situation. Cathy's sense of frustration is evident in her facial expression and the ensuing silence, whilst a cut away to some overhead branches that conceal the view of the open skies continues the visual motif of confinement.

As their walk proceeds, Isabella enquires about Heathcliff's adventures, a request deflected by Cathy and then by Heathcliff who declares that "there's only now". At this juncture, walking journeys are vital to the present, effecting an embodied corporeal experience which is captured in the mobility of the camera and the barely concealed contact made as Heathcliff and Cathy hold hands. For Solnit, walking in the nineteenth-century novel "provided a shared seclusion for crucial conversations [articulating] both physical and mental freedom" (2014: 99-100). Although in this scene walking provides Cathy with an opportunity to meet with Heathcliff, the crafting of the scene, both visually and sequentially, draws attention to the multiple connotations of such journeys for women in that they offer opportunities for freedom whilst at the same time reminding them of the constraints by which they live. The formality of the walk prohibits Cathy and Heathcliff their freedom, whilst Isabella functions as a tool for surveillance. Her role as chaperone testifies to Edgar's mistrust as well as his acknowledgement, and fear, of the potential of walking to provide a space for women's independence from, and possible resistance to, patriarchal control.

Cathy's confinement, and the inexorableness of her separation from Heathcliff is maintained in the next scene. Standing in the darkness outside Thrushcross Grange, Heathcliff looks through the windows as Edgar attends to Cathy, shown in an over-the-shoulder from Heathcliff's point of view. Cathy and Edgar are then joined by Nellie who holds up some items of infant's clothing, thus revealing Cathy's

pregnancy. As noted, windows are a significant element in the threshold chronotope and this moment in the film represents Cathy's potential crossing into motherhood. However, the grilles in the window which appear to dissect her body reinforce her confinement within Thrushcross Grange, and the image contrasts with the pleasure enjoyed by Cathy in the previous scene. When Edgar removes Cathy's coat and encourages her to be seated, the gesture visibly restricts her movement, and this, along with Edgar's unlacing of Cathy's boots, succeeds in infantilising her. Whilst this can be viewed as a domesticated, homely scene, it further reinforces the restricted mobility of women.

Women's continued surveillance within a patriarchal society is illustrated in these scenes. Even though walking provides an opportunity to throw off these constraints, Cathy is still controlled by numerous domestic, sartorial, social, and behavioural codes. Whilst as children, Heathcliff and Cathy's defiance is tolerated, when they are grown they adopt more socially recognisable roles. Heathcliff's independence is accompanied, if not caused by, his new wealth. In contrast, Cathy's walking is defined by social mores: whether she is inside or outside, her environment is replete with signifiers of entrapment. Thus, the final walking scene links a walk in the garden to parenthood through the bars of a window frame, removing once and for all the connection between walking and the freedom it promises. After this, Cathy and Heathcliff do not walk again together until their journey as children across the mudflats is repeated at the end of the film.

This chapter shows how Bakhtin's chronotope can be used to illuminate the intertextual relationships between the novel and Arnold's film. Any version of Brontë's complex novel cannot stand apart from its cultural afterlife and the examination of this alongside previous adaptations illuminates the originality of

Arnold's use of walking as a dialogue between bodies, space, and history. Produced in an era of austerity, the film eschews the nostalgia of traditional heritage cinema and instead deconstructs, through its depiction of race and gender, narratives of heritage and of Britishness. In this way, the conflicts in the film are a reminder of the immutability of oppression, of inequality, and of the class divide that permeates British society. Rather than presenting the moors within an "aesthetic of excess" (Shachar, 2012: 39) that appeals to notions of heritage and nostalgic perceptions of nationhood, Arnold's vision of the moors is rooted in a corporeal sensibility which prioritises the physical relationship between bodies and space as well as providing a site for other voices, and histories, to prevail connecting the film to twenty-first century concepts of spatial and mobility practices.

Wuthering Heights stands separate from Arnold's other work in its presentation of the haptic flâneuse. In previous films, the narrative trajectory combines with walking scenes to depict female characters' transformation. However, in Cathy's case, this trajectory is reversed: she moves from freedom to constraint, with walking scenes explicitly capturing this reversal. Furthermore, the film provides an alternative Heathcliff who embodies the hapticity of Arnold's other female characters as well as their initial sense of exclusion, thus aligning him with the disadvantaged and dispossessed characters in previous films. Despite his financial gains, it is evident through his continued emotional anguish that, without Cathy, he is psychologically bereft. The freedom that walking provides is contingent upon both characters.

Once again, through an emphasis on walking as a structural hinge, the film confirms the significance of walking scenes to narrative development, but the use of walking once again illustrates Arnold's progression as a filmmaker in that she is able

to develop these chronotopes and adapt them to new dimensions in her work. In the next chapter, which considers *American Honey*, the walking chronotope is challenged further in a film that is dominated by automobile travel. However, as will be shown, once again walking scenes possess vital narrative significance and reinforce the chronotope's importance in signalling women's agency and transformation.

Chapter Six: The Counter-Road Movie and the State of the Nation in *American Honey* (2016)

American Honey tells the story of Star, a mixed-race young woman who leaves her small town to work with a disparate group of itinerant magazine-subscription sellers, affiliated through their youth and a shared need to earn a living. Travelling across America in a minibus odyssey interrupted by motel stops and communal living, the subordination of walking to automobility challenges the chronotope of walking. However, this incongruity imbues the film's walking scenes with particular importance, not least because they help to populate the emptied spaces of the suburbs, countering the idea that, as Bill Bryon declares, "nobody walks anywhere in America nowadays" (1998: 155).

The film opens with Star rummaging through a skip, searching for food alongside her two younger siblings, Kelsey (Summer Hunsaker) and Rubin (Brody Hunsaker). After finding a discarded shrink-wrapped chicken that will provide food for dinner, Star attempts to hitch a ride home, but is both distracted and attracted by the appearance of a minibus containing her future colleagues, amongst them Jake, with whom she has a turbulent affair. Taking up Jake's offer of a job to sell magazine subscriptions door-to-door, Star decides to join the crew, leaving the children to the care of their reluctant mother. Whilst Jake's initial brashness is in stark contrast to Star's aura of circumspection, her confidence slowly emerges. She rejects first his guidance and then his attempts to influence and control her, and her independence aligns her firmly with the strong female protagonists of Arnold's previous work. As she develops more self-confidence and self-awareness, her relationship with Jake becomes increasingly troubled, fuelled by his potential for violent, unpredictable

behaviour, his jealousy of Star's sexual freedom, and his subservient and humiliating relationship to the group's team leader, Krystal. An encounter at the end of the film with two siblings and their drug-addicted mother leads Star to visit the supermarket to buy food for the neglected children, a reminder of the life she has left behind. The film concludes with Star wading into a lake, a moment of silent self-expression which exemplifies her burgeoning independence.

Star's ethnicity reinforces her outsider status, doubly removing her, through class and race, from the other members of the group, and so makes relevant an intersectional approach to the challenges she faces in the film. A transient figure escaping the paralysis of domesticity, walking for Star is a means to a financial end and personal liberation. Her confident gait, defiance of authority, assertive sexuality, and her inquisitiveness, all combine to bestow upon her the agency of Arnold's other female characters. In addition, walking enables Star to cross spatial and temporal thresholds into locations that she would not naturally enter: the affluent suburban spaces of Middle America, and masculine spaces such as ranches, truck-cabins, and oil-refineries. Here, her spontaneity and determination become vital tools in her acquisition of financial reward and group acceptance.

The chronotopes of the road and of encounters are prevalent throughout *American Honey*. These, combined with the narrative of a nomadic and hedonistic group of youths whose uncertain futures appear to put them on a road to nowhere, establishes the film as an example of what Nadia Lie refers to as a "counter-road movie" (2017) which is explained below. Another important consideration of this chapter is the consideration of the film's heterotopic spaces, a direction that Lie suggests is yet to be fully explored in studies of the road movie (2017: 230). For the magazine crew, the minibus doubles as both home and not-home: home because it

acts as a space for the ‘family’ of workers to assemble; not-home because life in the bus is always transient and mobile. The juxtaposition of mobility and stasis is also symbolised in the motels and other forms of temporary accommodation in which the crew rest. Furthermore, as in Arnold’s other work, the edgeland aesthetic dominates, but this time it describes the peripheral zones of a huge sprawling continent rather than Britain’s squeezed margins, with particular focus on the film’s use of motels and out-of-town retail parks.

Finally, for a film in which vehicular mobility dominates, these scenes articulate precisely the chronotope of walking in relation to modern consumerist society. In their transience, the film’s characters resemble a very different form of flâneur, in this case the Baudelairean rag-picker as described in the introduction to this thesis (Le Roy, 2017). This dispossessed itinerant becomes an appropriate symbol for the crew: like the rag-pickers who scoured the Parisian streets to commodify the detritus of a nascent modernity, the twenty-first century magazine sellers live off the disposable income of Middle America.

The Rag-Picker and the Flâneuse

American Honey affords the spectator a visual topography of mid-west America that also offers a glimpse into the stratification of its nation space. According to one reviewer, the film is an “indictment of grim social conditions [that] probes the murk and terror beneath the surface of contemporary life, and illuminates the vital role of ignorance, poor judgment, and wishful thinking in our national character” (Scott, 2016: n.p.). Drawn from a real-life study of a magazine sales crew (Urbina, 2007), the film works as a commentary on the transience and unpredictability of the contemporary gig-economy. Indeed, recent reports on the exploitation of young

people in the magazine sales industry draw parallels between real-life magazine crews and incidents of child-exploitation or human trafficking (Grant, 2015; Pelley, 2015). In the article from which Arnold drew inspiration for the story of *American Honey*, Ian Urbina argues that

labour and law enforcement officials said that since many sellers were runaways or high school dropouts or were from dysfunctional families or poor neighbourhoods, they had fewer options and were reluctant to report mistreatment or leave ... Many former sellers also said they kept quiet about problems out of fear of violence against them or those they left behind ... An escape from small-town boredom or overbearing parents, working on a mag crew is a lifestyle more than a job, and it brings good times with the bad. Like gangs, crews become family, sellers said, and the camaraderie of shared experiences is a bond not easily broken. (2007: n.p.)

In this context, Arnold's magazine crew is a symptom of a contemporary economic system that has generated a moral vacuum. Answerable to the commands of Krystal, the middle-woman in a pyramid-selling enterprise, the team serves an anonymous, invisible organizational structure that controls their income and dictates their lifestyle. As itinerant workers, the sales team are victims of a new austerity and are "beyond the communal and spatial structures of the modern nation-place" (Mathieson, 2015: 23). They are, to use Mathieson's phrase, a "community of wanderers" (2015: 25). Akin to a contemporary iteration of the rag-picker, the real-life magazine crews travel the suburbs of the United States rather than the streets of nineteenth-century Paris. Prowling the margins of American society, these crews are, like their rag-picker predecessors, liminal figures who, as Le Roy describes

literally liv[ed] at the fringes of society: in Paris, they resided in shanty towns on the edge of town as part of the community of zoniers ('zone'-dwellers or those living in the transition space between the city and countryside). There, he brought old pieces of rags to be turned into paper or cardboard ... Historically, he often falls in between the cracks. (2017: 129)

This description of the Parisian rag-picker provides a fitting analogy for the situation of the magazine crew in *American Honey*. Composed of a group of youths who have indeed fallen “between the cracks”, these modern rag-pickers live on the edge of town which for them consists of the various motels and other temporary resting places they find themselves in, along with the minibus itself which provides a continuous state of transition.

From the opening scene, the film depicts Star as a modern American iteration of the rag-picker, searching amongst the waste produce of a consumer society in order to survive. During the film’s first 60 seconds, the hand-held camera absorbs the audience into Star’s physical space as she rummages for food inside a dumpster, successfully finding a shrink-wrapped chicken that she can take home. The juxtaposition of confinement and open space is emphasised by the dumpster’s converging diagonal lines which enclose Star, whilst the open sky and the off-screen sounds of a train blaring in the distance are a reminder of freedom, travel, and mobility. The camera remains inside the dumpster with Star for a further 34 seconds before she tosses the chicken to her stepbrother, Rubin, whose red and blue costume, a reminder of national pride and ideologies, sits uncomfortably against this scene of deprivation.

Whilst the above scene offers a literal example of Star’s rag-picking, her association with the magazine crew enhances the analogy. The Parisian rag-pickers’ treasure consisted of “[s]hards of glass or woods [that] were recycled. Animal carcasses [that] were skinned for fur, and the bones turned into glue, [or] gelatine or phosphorus to be used in matches” (Le Roy, 2017: 129), but they also consisted of scraps which were converted to paper, and hence the slang term of ‘rag’ for magazine (OED, 2020). By selling magazines, the crew peddle an outmoded literary

form (Stuart-Turner, 2018) premised on idyllic and unattainable lifestyles.

Consequently, the crew is symptomatic of a failed social system.

De Certeau's notion of walking as a signifier of placelessness describes perfectly the situation of the magazine crew. Like the rag-pickers, the crew work in groups "for middlemen and [constitute] a sort of cottage industry located in the streets" (Benjamin, 2006: 53-54). If *flânerie*, according to Benjamin, is a "strolling commodity" (1999: 367), then Arnold's sales team is an embodiment of that commodity. Outside of workforce regulations, and part of an opaque capitalist network that completely alienates the peddler of the final product from the machinery that produces it, the crew is at the bottom of what is essentially a pyramid scheme of selling, and any money the crew earns flows upwards. For this reason, they are expendable and transient: their door-to-door routines subject to the whims and desires of their customers, whilst their jobs and livelihoods are equally impermanent.

Star as Outsider: Class and Ethnicity

The minibus is a communal site, and the lives of Star and her companions bear comparison to the experience of the travelling community. Like the travelling community, the crew are "off the network" (Mathieson, 2015), and their time in the minibus forms a separate heterotopic space of play and community which operates alongside the external world. For Sergei Shubin and Kate Swanson, travellers adapt to their changing living conditions by resorting to religious meetings and festivals (2010: 922), and in *American Honey*, the minibus scenes are replete with the iconography of a hedonistic commune: shared marijuana hits, acoustic guitar interludes, loud hip-hop and rock music, sexual preening and posturing, acts of playfulness, and other moments of sensory and sensual abandon. Midway through

the film, two members of the group, Shaunte (Shawna Rae Moseley) and J.J. (Raymond Coalson), acquire a dog and attempt to encourage it to ingest pot. Journeys are punctuated by temporary stays in numerous motels or rented houses, whilst campfire scenes and sing-along interludes all reinforce the communal atmosphere associated with the travelling community. The minibus itself is both a symbol and a reality of the crew's transient lifestyle. Laliv Melamed points out, in his discussion of Palestinian film, that the "minivan encapsulates the micropolitics of ... society; it becomes a space of social interaction and debate, a travelling public sphere" (2015: 396). There is, of course, a disconnect between sites of occupation and Western democracy, nevertheless the statement reflects the situation in *American Honey* in that the crew is an incongruent mix of individuals for which the minibus provides a democratic space where each character has a voice and drivers are interchangeable.

However, Star's access to the world of the minibus is subject to certain rules and rites which conform to Foucault's fifth principle of heterotopias whereby "the individual has to submit to rites and purifications. To get in one must have a certain permission and make certain gestures" (Foucault, 1986: 26). Jake's negotiations with Krystal are part of these permissions, whilst the stickers which he gives to Star form an initiatory ceremony which, we later learn, Jake offers to all new recruits. Despite her admittance into the minibus heterotopia, Star's position is constantly under review, suggesting also that her belonging is an illusion, dependent as much upon Krystal's prejudicial whims as it is upon the vicissitudes of the market economy.

The tensions between Krystal and Star are evident in their first meeting, with Krystal referring to Star as "the little red-neck chick". As a woman of mixed-race, Star is an outsider within a group of outsiders. As Eng suggests, "Star's racial identity is

never discussed in *American Honey*, nor is blackness in general” (2017: n.p.). However, the question of race is not ignored: in fact, it is present in Krystal’s constant criticism of Star. Krystal reference to Star being a “southern girl, a real *American Honey* like me” is not meant as a compliment; in fact, the racial undertones here are clear. As Eng points out, “Star is a charismatic, dreadlocked black woman impeding on the personal and monetary property of a Southern-bred entrepreneur” (2017: n.p.), and Krystal’s apparent attempt to recognise in Star a collective identity is barely concealed beneath her mocking smirk and her reference to Lady Antebellum’s song, *American Honey*, which gives the film its title. Antebellum is a reference to the period before the American Civil war and is weighed down with connotations of slavery²⁹. Furthermore, the song, as sung by the all-white crew at the end of the film, is met with silence by Star for whom it signifies a world to which she does not belong (Eng, 2017: n.p.). Krystal’s racist motives are also visually reinforced. The scene when Krystal, dressed in a bikini emblazoned with the Confederate flag, reprimands Star for her poor sales figures, is, as Eng notes: “a reassertion of dominance by way of decadent spectacle, where power comes in the form of racist iconography emblazoned on a skimpy piece of apparel” (2017: n.p.). Later on in the film, Krystal encourages the group to dress up as “white trash”, hurling a green dress at Star. Given the preceding visual and verbal clues, Krystal’s actions can only be read as confirming her image of Star as Other whilst reinforcing the latter’s feelings of being an outsider.

²⁹ In fact, Lady Antebellum changed its name to Lady A. in the light of Black Lives Matters debates in the summer of 2020 (Anon, 2020a).

Despite her apparent submissiveness to Krystal's dominant personality, Star is also an independent subject, adopting the active gaze of the *flâneuse* in what Sophie-Claudine Desroches terms "a yearning for recognition ... to create a sovereign space on the street, a path where women can assert their female subjectivity in the public sphere and compel others to acknowledge it" (2019: n.p.). Star fails to follow protocols: far from a naïve ingenue, she is mysteriously provocative and often calculating. She undermines and challenges the male gaze, and this is evident throughout the film when she places herself in a position of potential vulnerability in order to make a sale. In one scene, she jumps into the back of a flat-bed truck with three oil-workers; in another, she hitches a ride with a male truck driver; later in the film, she accepts an invite from three wealthy cowboys to go to their ranch and enjoy a barbecue.

The ranchers, in particular, embody the sense of entitlement apportioned to white, wealthy men. Their expensive, open-top car, their cowboy hats, and their expensive attire are symbols of confidence and affluence. Back at their ranch, they ply Star with tequila and barely conceal their lasciviousness. But Star is their match, and after successfully completing her sale (aided by Jake's aggressive intervention), she stands up in the front seat of Krystal's car, dancing joyously, with her right arm waving in the air. At this moment, her pose is reminiscent of that potent symbol of America's democratic values, Lady Liberty. Filmed at a low angle, Star dominates the frame (in fact, this image was used on the film's promotional posters and DVD cover) which implies not only a position of superiority for Star, but also invests the image with a political and historical significance, and its subversive connotations are reinforced by Star's exclamation, "I feel like I'm fucking America". Following as it does her 'hustling' of the white ranchers, this is a powerful statement, and "fucking"

can be read as both an adjective and a verb: on one hand, with her mixed-race ethnicity, her search for identity and agency within a patriarchal economy, and even her name, Star encapsulates the diversity, ambiguities, and uncertainties of that country; on the other hand, her “fucking” of America is perhaps a recognition that she is beginning to pay back some of the oppression visited upon her and her race by the inequalities inherent in the fabric of its society, as well as the hypocrisy she herself experiences from the privileged white classes she encounters as she walks their streets.

Ironically, the men who do threaten Star are the men closest to her: a stepfather who molests her, and Jake himself who becomes increasingly violent, unpredictable, and possessive. Indeed, Jake’s arrival at the ranch wielding a handgun is potentially calamitous, and after Star has spent the evening with Ethan, the oil-worker, earning a thousand dollars in the process, an angry and jealous Jake chases after him before returning to confront Star in a violent altercation. However, as with the ranchers, Star constantly turns the apparatus of power back upon men, her innocence and naiveté providing a masquerade to allow her to make her sale. Furthermore, whilst Jake sees his new acolytes as both training material and potential sexual conquests, a point made to Star by Krystal, Star is a match for his awkward attempts to impress her. On several occasions she defies Jake. For example, during her first sales experience, much to Jake’s annoyance, she challenges a Kansas mother, who appears to be questioning their integrity, and reminds the woman that her own teenage daughter, dancing suggestively in the back garden, is hardly a model of innocence. Likewise, in one walking scene, when Jake insists that Star needs him in order to learn the sales pitch, she responds by exclaiming that she “can do this shit by [herself]”. In addition, Jake’s flawed

masculinity is apparent not only in his submission to Krystal's proprietary control over him, but also in a scene when Star corrects his clumsy attempts to load his pistol.

The Road Movie and *American Honey*

Elaborating on the rag-picker's urban milieu, *American Honey* extends the localized stop-start mobility of the Parisian rag-picker to the wider canvas of the United States. The crew's road trip is punctuated by their brief, but vital, walking journeys which provide the pecuniary rewards necessary for their continued existence. Multiple forms of mobility are illustrated throughout the film, its various iterations recalling Bruno's notion of transito which describes "circulation that includes passages, traversals, transitions, transitory states, spatial erotics, (e)motion" (2002:71). Such mobilities reflect the various states present in Bruno's transito, and map out the state of American's nation space. Star's nomadism therefore affords a series of interactions which comment on, and critique, the many forms of mobility that underpin the concept of the American Dream. Bruno extends her idea of transito to the process of film-making itself:

film is modern cartography. It is a mobile map--a map of differences, a production of socio-sexual fragments and cross-cultural travel. A voyage of identities in transito, and a complex tour of identifications, film's siteseeing is an actual means of exploration--a housing and a tour of one's narrative and geography. (2002:71)

Bruno's model of the transito is analogous to the pre-production processes which led to the filming of *American Honey*. In many ways, the film represents Arnold's own transition as a director: from being heralded as an exponent of contemporary British social realism (Forrest, 2013), her cinematic relocation to the United States forms part of her own emotional and artistic odyssey, with the film's itinerary replicating a journey that she herself embarked on as part of her research (in Felsenthal, 2016:

n.p.). Furthermore, at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival, Arnold stated that her own travels across America opened her eyes to the poverty and lack of opportunity that exists (Cannes, 2016). For some of the actors in the film, many of them unprofessional, many of the locations were places they had encountered for the first time. Indeed, the actors describe the process of making the film itself as a journey with no clear destination (Cannes, 2016). The film is thus cinematically and metaphorically a road movie and, like Arnold, Star occupies the role of a voyageuse mapping out a contemporary cartography of mid-west America (O'Hagan, 2016: n.p.).³⁰

As a British director working within what has come to be seen as a quintessentially American genre (Cohan and Hark, 1997), Arnold uses the road movie framework to comment on notions of home, community, and space, whilst also engaging with the ambiguous relationship that America has with walking. In *American Honey*, she extends the conventional 'buddy-structure' of traditional road movies to present a community of travellers for whom travel is not predicated on leisure or the rejection of the patriarchal myth, but is instead a *modus operandi* in order to work and find a place in the world. However, as noted earlier in this chapter, the film is also an example of the counter-road movie (Lie, 2017), but it is also

³⁰ In an interview Arnold says: "America is a vast and complicated place filled with all kinds of truths and contradictions and I wanted to find my own emotional connection to it ... Otherwise I couldn't have made this film. It's a mixture of what I saw and learned on those travels, but also what I grew up seeing on films – the mythical America of westerns and road movies. That's all in there, too" (O'Hagan, 2016).

important to outline the characteristics of the conventional road movie before exploring how *American Honey* conforms to its alternative form.

The road movie is “any story that centres on **mobility** and takes place in an era in which **automobile** transportation exists” (Lie, 2017: 10, emboldened in the original). At its most recognisable, the road movie is a mythologising of mechanised mobility as a means of freedom from emotional and social paralysis, the constraints of convention (Archer, 2013; Laderman, 2002), and an escape from hegemonic norms (Cohan and Hark, 1997: 1), whilst its narratives of self-discovery and rebellion are often bound up with themes of masculinity in crisis (Archer, 2013: 2). Set against a backdrop of iconic landscapes or panoramic space which yields to the spectator’s gaze as much as it does to the protagonists’ adventures (Archer 2013), space in the road movie is a commemoration of the past as well as articulating “a patriotic mythology which obscures the failings of the frontier myth (Klinger, 2001: 191).

Narrative structure in the traditional road movie, whilst often linear, also describes “an aimless odyssey toward an undefined place of freedom. Encounters are episodic and disconnected and travelling shots of open roads and landscapes are the stylistic heart of the genre” (Corrigan and White, 2004: 318). Characterised by the disenchanting who seek to find themselves ‘out there’ on the road, the genre is dominated by male protagonists, resistant to the “responsibilities of domesticity” (Cohan and Hark, 1997: 1-3). As David Laderman outlines:

The driving force propelling most road movies ... is an embrace of the journey as a means of cultural critique. Road movies generally aim beyond the borders of cultural familiarity, seeking the unfamiliar for revelation, or at least the thrill of the unknown. Such travelling, coded as defamiliarization, likewise suggests a mobile refuge from social circumstances felt to be lacking in some way. This broadly conceived notion of cultural critique functions in road movies on many levels: cinematically, in terms of innovative travelling camera work, montage and soundtrack; narratively, in terms of an open-ended, rambling plot structure; thematically, in terms of frustrated, often desperate characters lighting out for something better, someplace else. Thus the road

movie celebrates subversion as a literal venturing outside of society. (2002: 1-2)

American Honey fulfils many of Laderman's characteristics: its central narrative uses the road trip as means of escape, and in Star's rejection of home and family to pursue the search for her own identity, the film clearly borrows from the themes and structures of the genre. Despite this, as will be shown, the film also goes against the grain of these conventions. Whilst the magazine crew might well be "lighting out for something better", they also find camaraderie amongst the group. It is fitting, then, that Star sees life with the magazine crew as an opportunity to escape a future circumscribed by her small town life, and in this, *American Honey* continues the "power-to" narratives of Arnold's previous films, and, as in those films, this agency is concomitant with the protagonist's constant mobility.

Emotional and situational paralysis are themes of many conventional road movies (Aitken and Lukinbeal, 1997: 350). From the beginning of *American Honey*, Star is constrained by an obligation to her siblings and by her economic poverty. The film therefore documents, in the style of the typical road movie, her escape from these constraints. Her mobility is born from the instability of life at home, and the impetus for her to join Jake's travelling sales crew is enhanced by the scenes which precede her departure. After returning home following her initial meeting with Jake, Arnold presents a domestic scene that highlights the emotional and economic poverty of her family. An insert of a half-eaten bowl of cereal, sitting atop a book about "The Universe" (one of several references to travel and escape in the film), cuts to close-ups of Star that frame her tightly as she crouches down to place her 'rag-pickings' into the fridge. Star's emotional and physical entrapment is further

emphasised later when she is groped by her drunken step-father, a jarring moment that evidences a history of sexual abuse.

This scene is followed immediately by a low angle of Star as she soars high on a swing. The camera pans left to right to keep her centre-frame until she leaps off, landing on her feet before walking purposefully to the right of the frame. The symbolism here is clear: she has decided to leave her childhood behind and abdicate her role as guardian to her two siblings. The subsequent close-up of a moth against a windowpane provides another natural image to hint at the potential for freedom and escape. Subsequent shots of a spider crawling across the wall, posters of animals roaming savannahs, pictures of dolphins, turtles, dogs, and birds, continue the images of natural life present in Arnold's previous films. These natural images further exemplify the notion of borders being dissolved, as noted in the analysis of *Wuthering Heights* in the previous chapter. Here, they foreshadow Star's own impending freedom, further reinforced by the image of two ruby slippers, an allusion to *The Wizard of Oz* (Fleming, 1939), aligning Star with the character of Dorothy (Judy Garland) who escapes the boredom of her life on her parent's farm for adventures in the dreamworld of Oz. In this case, Star's escape from home is less about adventure as a substitute for home comfort, but is, instead, about the need for identity and independence.

Female Representation and the Road Movie: Krystal

In setting her first American film as a road movie, Arnold engages in a dialogue with both the genre and its gender representations. Indeed, Carrie Tarr and Brigitte Rollet argue that the position and the experience of women in the road movie, as both protagonist and as director, is "particularly transgressive [given their] traditionally ...

assigned roles within the private (domestic) space” (2001: 228-229). Given Arnold’s concern with female mobility in her previous films, *American Honey* offers, perhaps more than any of her previous films, an intersectional commentary on women’s search for an identity which is repeatedly subsumed beneath patriarchal, racial, and socio-economic structures.

Shari Roberts argues that in the women’s road movie “protagonists take to the road not to escape socially coded notions of the feminine ... but rather to flee patriarchy and the effects on their lives” (1997: 63). However, in such road movies, women characters cannot escape their inscription into a patriarchal framework. The open road is itself coded as masculine, and women are inevitably subsumed beneath the conventions of narratives which “reinscribe women into regressive social representations of femininity” (Roberts, 1997: 66). In *American Honey*, the character of Krystal, in particular, symbolises the ambiguities of women protagonists in the road movie. Geoffrey Macnab suggests that the members of the crew are “like contemporary equivalents to the rebels from the *Easy Rider* generation” (2016: n.p.), and Krystal is like a modern-day Captain America (as played by Peter Fonda in Dennis Hopper’s 1969 film). She embodies capitalist values and reduces the young people in the crew to commodities. For example, in their first exchange, Krystal asks if Star has anyone who is “going to miss [her]”, suggesting that the most valuable commodity is actually a dispensable workforce, a notion reinforced later in the film when she tells Star that she’ll “leave her by the side of the road” if she causes any trouble. Krystal distances herself from the workers, travelling between towns and cities in her car with Jake whilst the rest of the crew is packed into the bus.

By locating a centre of power within the female body, Arnold subverts and questions traditional associations of money with masculine power. Dressed in shorts,

revealing tops and flip-flops, Krystal's costume reflects her confidence in herself and in her sexuality. However, rather than her body being subsumed or objectified beneath a patriarchal gaze, her own agency is mitigated by her embodiment of capitalist values. In the scene when she castigates Star for ineffectual sales returns, Krystal stands dressed in a new bikini, which is emblazoned with the Confederate flag, as Jake oils her skin. Krystal is captured in a full shot, filling the doorway to the bathroom whilst a subdued Jake speaks only when spoken to. The still-intact tags hanging from the briefs is a signifier of her casual consumerism, as is the pile of money scattered on the bed. Furthermore, her power is reinforced by the space she occupies in the motel scenes. Her rooms are sites of authority and surveillance to where members of the crew are called. In all instances, Krystal chooses a room on the first floor and, on several occasions, she is filmed from a low angle as she looks down from the balcony on to the assembled crew.

Krystal's character reflects the tensions inherent in road movie representations of women. On one hand, she adopts a 'traditional' masculine position of power and scopic authority, signified by her economic and occupational status, with nothing escaping her all-knowing eye. In addition, she is the only major female character in all of Arnold's films who drives a car which, in the conventional road movie, further aligns her with representations of masculinity. On the other hand, her confident sexuality, her management of the group, and her mastery of Jake, are characteristics of her agency: like Star, she can do "this shit" on her own.

The Counter-Road Movie

Whilst conforming to conventions of the road movie, *American Honey* also contains many elements of the counter-road movie. Rejecting traditional road movie

narratives which recount the conquest of landscape by a usually male protagonist, the counter-road movie often draws attention to the futility of travel, focusing on journeys that fail to materialize, on unreliable forms of transport, and on non-places transformed into temporary domestic sites (Lie, 2017: 15-18). In the counter-road movie, traditional forms are subverted: roads become home, margins dominate and leak into the centre (as with the edgeland aesthetic discussed in previous chapters), and the familiar and the unfamiliar are transposed. However, the counter-road movie, despite its name, is not an alternative to the road movie, neither does it necessarily eschew road movie conventions. Instead, it plays with them, manipulates them, and even parodies them (Lie, 2017).

Rather than the linearity of conventional road movies, the counter-road movie employs circular rhythms. For example, one of the closing destinations for the crew is a return for Krystal to her own hometown, an area of deprivation which will require no fictions of sympathy to elicit business, for the stories of the crew are the stories of the residents. The house that Star visits in this neighbourhood is a mirror image of the conditions of her own previous life, with two small children living in neglect with a drug-addicted parent who lies prostrate on the couch and is practically ignorant of her children's welfare. For a brief moment, Star fills the space of the absent mother, shopping for food in an act reminiscent of the film's opening scenes. Likewise, the film's ambiguous ending contributes to the sense of circularity. After being given a small turtle by Jake, Star wades into a lake and returns it to the water, a moment which returns the film, which opened with images of the sky, to elemental imagery. Star begins and ends the film submerged: in the dumpster scene which opens the film, she is buried beneath the discarded trappings of a consumerist culture; at the film's conclusion, she submerges herself beneath the lake. For several seconds, she

stays below its surface, before a dramatic mid-shot captures her in profile as she emerges from its dark waters, flinging back her dreadlocks and spraying water into the air in the process. The imagery of water at this moment is both calming and cleansing, contrasting with the noise of the campfire and the crew's tribal dancing. This sequence signifies both a baptism and a rebirth: her returning of the turtle to its natural milieu is symbolic not only of the tensions between displacement and home, of mobility and stasis, but could also be a confirmation of Star's disillusionment with the trajectory of her own odyssey, and her separation from the others in the frame provides an indicator of her independence.

In the counter-road movie, different forms of travel can be a salve to the disappointments of life, transforming potential unhappiness to contentment and pleasure. The truck driver who buys the boating magazines, who has spent a lifetime on the road and has never seen the sea, is not an image of misery. His cabin is filled with pictures of family and home and he is happy to sing along to Bruce Springsteen's '*Dream Baby Dream*' whilst talking to Star. Extracted from their roots, the magazine crew is geographically and emotionally disassociated from home, and yet they are bound together through their camaraderie. Vicarious freedoms are enjoyed: Star returns living things to their natural environment: rescuing a bee from a swimming pool, freeing a wasp trapped behind a window (echoing a similar scene in Arnold's earlier film, *Wasp*); and buying groceries for the neglected children provides Star with a chance to redeem any residual guilt she may harbour at leaving her siblings with their disinterested mother.

American Honey's manipulation of road movie conventions is evident in Star's mobility. Rather than circumscribing Star within a narrative trajectory that illustrates her journey as an externalizing of patriarchal myths of belonging and home, Arnold

invests her protagonist with a spatial erotics of (e)motion and mobility. Movement, both physical and emotional, enables Star to transcend the economic and emotional stasis that threatens to engulf her at the beginning of the narrative, whilst the mobile camera imbues walking scenes with a sensory immediacy. The world for Star becomes a space of sensuous experience, one that is felt through tactile encounters with people and with places. Her mobility is emphasised not only through the journeys in the minibus, but also through walking scenes which heighten her independence and transformation. Indeed, I argue that the relationship between the walking chronotope and automobility contributes significantly to *American Honey*'s counter-road movie credentials.

The crossroads motif is another characteristic of the counter-road movie (Lie, 2017: 17), and it is a point at which the chronotopes of walking, thresholds and roads converge. The sequences in the bus, therefore, join the dots between the various places in which the crew attempt to make a living. However, it is in the interstices, the crossroads, of these journeys that walking scenes dominate. Outside of the enclosed world of the minibus, walking provides not only a chance to engage in a corporeal relationship with the world, but also offers a release, in the end, from a form of community that has its own limitations. Thus, whilst Star encounters America through the images that pass by the windows of the minibus, it is only when she walks the suburbs does she experience it.

The Counter-Road Movie and the Minibus

The symbol, and means, of escape in the road movie is predominantly the automobile, and these dominate *American Honey*. As in Arnold's previous films, cars are driven exclusively by men, and are invariably linked to transgressive acts or

joyless sexual encounters. With the exception of Krystal, this is also the case in this film, for example, the truck driver's rig, the oil-workers' flat bed, the oil-worker's 4x4, the Texan ranchers' Mercedes (indeed, even Krystal is often chauffeured in her own convertible by Jake).

The conventional road movie's fetishisation of the car is part of the aura of attraction that accompanies that genre's narratives of escape. The car is a tool to penetrate the landscape, but it is also, through the camera's framing and fragmentation of its parts, coded as female (Cagle, 1994: 24). However, in *American Honey*, the cinematography eschews any objectification of the minibus: the vehicle itself is presented primarily as an interior space, with very few images of its exterior. The construction of the scenes inside the bus produces an open atmosphere that provides a relief to any sense of confinement. Shot with a hand-held camera, the images are tightly framed, but the 4:3 aspect ratio creates a height that mitigates against any sense of claustrophobia, and this is aided by a depth of field that offers a deepened sense of perspective. The porosity of this space is also suggested on occasions when the interior is broken by characters emerging through the sunroof to sit atop the roof of the bus, whilst the continuous dialogue from the rest of the crew, heard as 'voices-off' in the background, further amplifies the sonic space.

American Honey's counter-road movie credentials are further reinforced by the cinematography employed in the road sequences themselves. According to Lie, in the counter-road movie

roads are often framed in peculiar ways. Whereas normal road movies generally position us in the driver's seat, opening up our view to the horizon through travelling-shots, 'counter-road movies' are often marked by diagonal roads which traverse our screen from left-to-right ... by a focus on the margins of the road, from where we watch cars passing by ... or by positioning the protagonist in the midst of traffic, alone and on foot. (2017: 17)

Tensions between stasis and mobility are emphasised by the position of the camera inside the minibus, the lateral tracking of the world outside pulling against the relative immobility of the passengers inside. This movement of the camera, set against Star's static position in the minibus, presents the world outside as dynamic and ever-changing. Over the course of the fourteen scenes shot inside the bus, the landscape outside is one of shifting sites describing a geo-political, topographical network: from city skylines and affluent suburbs to out-of-town edgeland sites such as trailer parks and shopping malls, verdant pastureland to working oil-fields, networks of train-tracks and freeway intersections, and vast rivers. Whilst it might be seen that Arnold deploys the road movie conventions of using "the road to imagine the nation's culture" (Cohan and Hark, 1997: 3), the world beyond is separate and beyond the grasp of the passengers in the bus. It is coded as a screen, a series of moving images that depict an unattainable world.

Star as Spectatrix: the Minibus as Mobile Cinema

Star's position at the rear of the bus denies the spectator any mastering perspective of the road. Instead of a forward momentum provided by the view through the windscreen, the camera replicates her look out on to the passing landscape: she is a passive spectator. Edgelands of cities, its factory units, motels, petrol stations, and fast-food outlets, all roll by as they approach their sometimes unknown destinations, but these are once again framed from a distance, indicating a sense of their otherness and unattainability. Star is also separated from the images outside, her eyeline obscured by bus furniture, by other members of the crew, and by the various diagonals and horizontals of overhead signs, crash barriers, and bridge armature that cross the frame.

The perspective from inside the bus means that the landscape is doubly removed through the lens of the camera and then through the windows of the bus which function as a second screen. Star is a spectator of this cinematic landscape, but it often fails to engage her in any way. Whilst the others point out various landmarks or roadside conveniences, Star remains mostly silent. As David Bissell suggests, the “window engenders a particular form of detachment from the landscape where the body is shielded” (2009: 46). For this reason, Star is an embodiment of the threshold chronotope.³¹ For Bruno, “the streetscape is as much a filmic ‘construction’ as it is an architectural one” (2002:27). Constantly “in transit” (Bruno, 2002), Arnold’s characters exist outside of these spaces, observing them as a series of images on a movie screen, and indeed often awed by them. It is through the various scenes in the minibus that Arnold presents landscapes as images to be consumed by both characters and spectators alike. Like Jackie in *Red Road* before her, Star becomes Bruno’s spectatrix (Bruno, 1993: 51).

The accompanying sites/sights elicit admiring responses from the crew: the first glimpse of the Kansas skyline is followed by comments about Superman, whose character hails from Kansas, and Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, whilst affluent suburban houses are met with awe and wonder. To the crew members, these images are dreamscapes, visual delights that impress with both their scale and their novelty. In fact, one crew member, Kalium (Isaiah Stone), jokes about creating a

³¹ On several occasions in the film, Star breaks through the borders of inside and outside, emphasizing her desire to collapse the boundaries of self and space. She is frequently shown sitting on the roof of the minibus, or else putting her head out of the car window, reminiscent of Hetty in *Milk*.

huge skate-park through the middle of one of the mansions they see as they drive towards their first drop. The bus therefore provides a spectatorial space, and through its windows its passengers can view and admire the images of the world beyond. Whilst Neil Archer suggests that the analogy of being in a car to the cinematic experience is “well worn” (2017: 510), the view through these rectangular screens in *American Honey* undoubtedly approximates to a cinematic experience. The landscape is a cinema of attraction, and life inside the bus is a representation of the real for Star and the crew. Their mobility is a simulacrum of movement: it is as if the world outside is a shifting panorama of space whilst the bus itself acts as a repository of community.

Heterotopic Spaces: Motels

The minibus as a site of cinematic spectatorship transforms it into a moving heterotopia, combining several disparate, and often incompatible, places within a single space (Foucault, 1986: 25). Indeed, the communal space of the minibus is analogous to Foucault’s notion of the ship as the heterotopia “par excellence”:

a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea and that, from port to port, from tack to tack, from brothel to brothel, it goes as far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their gardens.
(Foucault, 1986: 27)

If the road movie substitutes the highway for the ocean, and the automobile for the boat, then the points of intermission are not the ports, but the motels and hotels which break up the journey.

Dislocating and dislocated, the motel, as Foucault describes it, “is where a man goes with his car and his mistress and where illicit sex is both absolutely sheltered and absolutely hidden, kept isolated without however being allowed out in

the open" (1986: 27). Usually sited outside of the town or city, the cinematic motel is a transient space imbued with transgressive values, deviant behaviour, and violence (Clarke et al, 2009). The hotel and the motel, as Lie states, are part of the iconography of the road movie, but in the counter-road movie such places are fashioned into more "homely sites" (Lie, 2017: 16). The motels in *American Honey* function in both ways. First, as interim dwelling places, they act as temporary homes, but they are also characterised as anonymous and unhomely. In other scenes, motel exteriors act as early morning meeting places for Krystal to provide daily briefings, both pre- and post-shift. The first motel they encounter, in Kansas, is described by one of the crewmembers, Austin (Garry Howell), as a "crack" house, and by another as a "sketchy-ass motel". A left to right tracking-shot shows children and a dog playing on a narrow strip of grass beyond which lie road-side restaurants and highway flyovers: it is an edgeland site populated by transient bodies, and, in their simple box-like architecture, the rooms in these motels could well stand for the flats in *Dog, Wasp, or Fish Tank*.

However, the crew also transform these sites into temporary domestic spaces, and their exteriors turned into areas of pleasure and play, transgression, and even aggression. In one scene, images of young men playing basketball combine with the women in the magazine crew who are practicing line-dance moves. During 'losers' night', when the least successful sellers have to literally fight each other, a long-shot of the crew letting off fireworks against an outdoor bonfire, set against a rap soundtrack, creates an intense, tribal atmosphere. An image of Corey (McCaul Lombardi), naked, war-painted, and standing crouched atop the minibus, lends the scene a primitive air, reinforced by the group's repeated chant of 'fight, fight'. The brutality of the scene, filmed almost in one continuous take and interrupted only by a

confused and worried reaction shot from Star, is a reminder of the fragile threshold between play and violence. The audience's sight of the fight is obscured at times by the circling mob, its atavism relieved only by the intervention of Pagan (Arielle Holmes), another member of the group.



Figure 24: Edward Hopper: Nighthawks (Art Institution of Chicago).

Arnold's use of lighting further emphasises the alterity of motels. In one scene, an exterior is captured in a highly-stylised shot, reminiscent of the paintings of Edward Hopper whose work reflects the alienation of mid twentieth-century urban America (see figure 24). The motel front appears as a narrow horizontal strip caught between two bands of black shadow, as the orange orb of the moon, sitting ethereally against the night sky, fills the upper half of the frame (see figure 25). The dark space of the parking lot fills the lower third of the frame in the foreground. Lit by a series of sodium lights which cast deep shadows over two small figures crouched outside one of the rooms, and hemmed in between the diagonal lines that cut across the frame, the shot reinforces the function of the motel as both a dislocated and dislocating space. The isolation within the frame, combined with its stillness and

painterly qualities, conveys the impression of a paused reality, one that suggests the world of the magazine crew as one “bracketed off” from an external world. This sense of illusion is reiterated in another motel scene which recounts Star’s first night with the crew when she is disturbed by Pagan’s sleepwalking. Pagan’s paranoid railings against the modern world take place within an emptied carpark, the juxtaposition of isolation and post-modern anxiety coming together in this heterotopic site.



Figure 25: the motel in *American Honey* (*American Honey*, Andrea Arnold: 2016).

It is not until the crew arrives at the house in Williston that Star is allowed a level of inclusivity within the living spaces of the film, and in this domestic space, Star is able to reassert her autonomy. After observing a moth fluttering against the curtain, another image of a small life to add to the many that inhabit Arnold’s visual world, Star takes a torch and walks through the rooms of the house to find Jake. She first alights on Krystal, and then Kal and Corey, before arriving at Jake’s bed. Star’s walk encourages the spectator to share her heightened consciousness, the light

providing a lens through which she can view the inhabitants of her world. Through the torchlight directed by Star, Arnold depicts the confines of Star's life: the tunnel of light further exacerbating the confinement presented by the boxed aspect ratio, whilst the verticals of door-frames, the rectilinear shapes of window frames, and the crowded bedrooms all signify the notion that whilst Star can 'own' domestic space, it merely returns her to a previous state of entrapment. Her agency in this scene is reinforced by her invitation to Jake to accompany her outside, and this brief but important walk becomes imbued with a search for meaning. Star's nocturnal passage through the darkened corridors of the house presents a form of enlightenment. Jake's subsequent 'secret', however, turns out to be his stolen treasure, pilfered from customers' homes.

Walking and the Emptiness of the Suburbs

American Honey's interior spaces, just as in Arnold's previous films, offer images of everyday life, but this ordinary everydayness is also evident in the film's depiction of external spaces. Although the more extravagant, and cinematic, images are reserved for the spectacle beyond the minibus windows, the exterior locations that the crew negotiate are mostly the mundane: for example, motel and supermarket parking lots, or suburban streets and gardens; or else they are relieved of any glamour, such as the dusty roads that lead to the oil-worker's accommodation, and the central reservation where Star steps into a rotting carcase. There are one or two exceptions, which are considered below, but overall, Arnold's rejection of a mythologising landscape is indicative of *American Honey's* counter-road movie credentials.

The ordered geometry of the suburbs provides a map on which walkers create their own stories: tarmacadamed surfaces provide blank spaces on which the members of the crew can project their own fantasies; pavements crisscross with streets and roads, forming a network of redundant zones, settings for spatial stories yet to be told. In their first walk together through the neighbourhood of Mission Hills, Jake's advice to Star is to devise stories in order to make a sale. Suspicion, distrust or simply a lack of credulity are common responses to the group's walking habits: the Kansas mother who responds sceptically to Jake's pitch about being a college student; the oil-worker who suggests that Star's motive for selling magazines is "bullshit". Prior to their visit to the affluent oil-rich neighbourhood of Williston, Krystal encourages the members of the crew to dress up as "dirty white trash" to create a fiction that will persuade the rich housewives to part with their money. These stories alter according to the social strata within which the crew moves, and when they get to Rapid City, there is no need for fiction, for the stories of the crew are the stories of the inhabitants of this community, a shared tale of poverty. Ironically it is here that Arnold presents a human presence in the neighbourhoods as glimpsed from the minibus. On the grass verges and front gardens of the modest housing estates, people gather in a picture of community which is absent from those more economically advantaged areas of the country.

By locating the film in contemporary America, Arnold engages with debates about the place of walking in "this most sedentary of lands" (Benfield, 2013: n.p.). The urban planners of America have, according to some commentators, slowly begun to erase walking, and thus also the pedestrian, from their blueprints, and *American Honey* interrogates this tension both in the relationship of walking to cars and the spaces in which both forms of mobility occur. As Tom Vanderbilt argues, in

America walking is “an act dwelling in the margins, an almost hidden narrative running beneath the main vehicular text” (2012, n.p.). Likewise, Antonia Malchik says that “pedestrianism is seen as a dubiously counter-culture activity” (2015: n.p.), a secondary form of mobility in a country that prioritises automobility (see also Glanz et al., 2012, and Mallin, 2011). Vanderbilt writes that “as a profession, traffic engineering has historically tended to treat pedestrians like little bits of irritating sand gumming up the works of their smoothly humming traffic machines” (2008: n.p.). This phenomenon is not singular to the United States. In Britain, for example, Iain Sinclair argues that

Walking is increasingly a sort of final democracy. The weight of what’s being [politically] imposed is very much anti-walking, and has to do with control of space, creating public areas you can’t walk in—which are completely covered by surveillance, policing, private spaces, gated communities, and unexplained entities at the edge of things. So walking around becomes actually difficult. (in an interview with O’Connell, 2017: n.p.)

Whilst walking is still regarded as a pre-eminently sensory form of mobility, it is also out of place in a world in which space is designed with mechanised transport as the primary means of movement.³² The growth of the suburbs is considered a key

³² Recent urban initiatives such as those described in the “New Urbanism” website, promote “the creation and restoration of diverse, walkable, compact, vibrant, mixed-use communities composed of the same components as conventional development, but assembled in a more integrated fashion, in the form of complete communities ... the increased use of trains and light rail, instead of more highways and roads” (New Urbanism, 2017). Accompanied by images of European cities such as Venice and Copenhagen, alongside French impressionist paintings of nineteenth century urban life, the New Urbanism website claims that “urban living is rapidly becoming the new

factor in America's reliance on automotive transport, whilst suburban sprawls have been blamed for increasing levels of anomie, alienation, crime, and social fragmentation (Fainstein, 2000; Katz, 1999). As Edward Blakely and Maru Gail Snyder argue, the increased popularity of transportation, coinciding with the rise of the suburbs, has sounded the death-knell for the "walking city" (1997: 12).

The walking scenes in *American Honey* are therefore an appropriate screen on which Arnold is able to project that nation's concerns with walking as a form of mobility, and this is particularly evident in those sequences located in suburban settings which are often emptied of people. The suburban locations in the film possess wide pedestrian-friendly pavements, yet there is an eerie sense of silence and desolation about them, even more so in one sequence that depicts some of the new and half-built sites which are yet to be inhabited. Absent of any signs of labour, there is a haunting quality to the building sites in this scene. In fact, they represent the birthing of suburbia: large, empty domestic shells surrounded by land that is patched, dry, and unseeded; land that will eventually be transformed into the decorative, manicured lawns that will provide recreational space for affluent families to be observed by people from behind the windows of future passing minibuses. These building sites are spaces of liminality, and the greyness of the landscape, matched with the sunless skies and the blank expressions on the faces of the crew

hip and modern way to live for people of all ages. Currently, there are over 4,000 New Urbanist projects planned or under construction in the United States alone, half of which are in historic urban centres" (New Urbanism, 2017). There is a wistful nostalgia to the movement which, according to Fainstein, is popular despite its lack of "theoretical rigour" (2000: 462).

members, adds to the monotony of the scene. This liminality is captured when two of the crew members alight from the bus and make their way into the neighbourhood. The camera stays with them, observed by Star through the cinematic screen of the windows. On the left of the walkers can be seen the uncultivated land of the building site, on the right is the image of what will emerge from the planner's vision: expensive suburban dwellings, cars on the front driveways, perfectly cut greenspace which is devoid of social interaction.

A feeling of alienation pervades the suburbs. Despite the majority of the locations being residential areas, the subscription-sellers are often the only human beings around. At drop-off points, where they are released either singularly or in pairs, it is evident that the crew members are moving from the communal space of the minibus into spaces of isolation. In many of these scenes, the camera stays in the bus with Star looking on pensively at the crew members as they disperse and walk towards their routes, the camera framing them in isolation through the bus windows. In these images, Arnold comments on the vacuity of these affluent suburbs, presenting them as ambiguous places that both invite community but also inhibit it. If, as Mathieson argues, "walking is used as a form of imagining a national space", then it is also clear that Arnold's depiction of suburbia also helps to "[raise] questions about the production of the connected nation" (Mathieson, 2015: 17). These houses are designed to minimize human interaction with their large front lawns and drives demarcated by high fences, whilst their parked cars, indicating human presence, are ghostly in their stillness, their drivers absent from view.

A Grammar of Walking

This depiction of the suburbs invites comparison to a “heterotopia of compensation” which for Foucault is “a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled” (Foucault, 1986: 27). Therefore, although the immediate milieu of the magazine crew is characterised by disorder, the suburbs are highly organized along geometric lines, with precise, neatly fashioned front lawns bordering equally pristine houses and drives.

This regimented organization of spatial suburban geography is evident in a scene when Jake and Star attempt to make their first ‘sale’. Here, trees line the roads, separating vehicles from pedestrians who are directed along narrow strips that pass as pavements, and the geometric patterns of urban space determine a grammar of walking from which characters rarely deviate. However, a tension exists between the film language and the ordered mobility required of the urban map. As Jake and Star proceed along the pavement, a distinct rhythm can be identified in their walking: two-shots are followed by individually framed images, with each of the characters alternating in taking the lead. This rhythmic fluidity of their walking, captured with the usual hand-held energy of Ryan’s camera, is a mobile dynamic at odds with the strict grammar of the routes they traverse. Even so, following their first unsuccessful sales pitch, this adherence to the suburban walking-grammar is disturbed. After an angry Star storms out of the house, instead of following the path from the door, she turns immediately left across the lawn, her route cutting across the pavements and onto the road. The camera circles her, cutting from a front to a rear shot, intensifying, for the spectator, Star’s anger. The difference in intensity between the scenes before and after their visit to the house is revealed in the

average shot duration which, in the first scene, is seven seconds compared to eleven in the second. The breaking of the geometric grammar in the second scene is thus accompanied by more a more energetic film language, reinforced by the circling camera.

Throughout the film, the tension the walking scenes is reflected in the directions in which characters proceed. In her discussion of the Varda's *Sans toit ni loi*, (English title, *Vagabond*, 1985), Susan Hayward suggests that, through Varda's contrast of movement and immobility, she "subverts the traditional codes of classic narrative cinema which depict man as the gender on the move and woman as static" (Hayward, 2000: 272).³³ In addition, according to Guy Austin, the usual road movie grammar consists of left-to-right tracking shots which denotes a progression from the past to the future (1996: 86-87) and thus correlates with the narrative's conventional trajectory.³⁴ On the other hand, Varda's film, as a counter-road movie, reverses the

³³ *Vagabond* begins with the body of its main protagonist, Mona (Sandrine Bonnaire), lying dead in a road-side ditch. The film subsequently pieces together the events leading up to her death through a series of witness statements, which become increasingly unreliable, along with incidents that reveal the oppressive levels of discrimination and exploitation that Mona, as an outsider, experiences on her journey through France.

³⁴ See also Egizii et al (2012) for their research into spectator responses to left-to-right and right-to-left tracking shots: "After performing a factor analysis, an ANOVA [analysis of variation test] showed a significant relationship between viewer evaluations on the Negative Affect factor and the two experimental conditions, such that right-to-left motion was perceived more negatively" (2012: 2).

walking grammar and instead tracks from right-to-left (Hayward, 2000: 273). For Archer, this implies the lack of any sense of heroic discovery, and instead replaces the patriarchal search for identity with a total loss of identity (Archer, 2013: 45).

American Honey owes some of its aesthetic to Varda's own road movies, in particular *Vagabond*'s framing and tracking. Whilst *American Honey* combines both left-to-right and right-to-left examples of lateral tracking, the camera's position is not always sustained: scenes switch between both vectors, with the hand-held camera creating a circling, immersive effect. Examples of left-to-right tracking occur in those scenes that depict Star as decisive and purposeful, or in scenes which lead to moments of freedom and pleasure. For example, in her first meeting with Jake on the K-Mart carpark, Star's brief walk is captured in a left-to-right track that gives way to a circling motion, signifying the promise of escape combined with curiosity and hopefulness. However, the camera's prowling intimacy reflects the mating game that is taking place, with close-ups of eyes, mouths, and shifts in composition which see Star and Jake switching places on the screen, all emphasising this performance ritual.

Left-to-right tracking is employed in the walking scene in which Star returns her siblings to their mother, Misty (Chasity Hunsaker). The camera frames Star in a close, hand-held shot, defining the tight parameters of her world, combined with subsequent cuts to a shot from behind her, or to her feet as she treads through the muddy tyre-tracks on the car park. The innocence of the two children is pointed up by the shot of Rubin holding a plush toy dinosaur, juxtaposed with the garish lighting on the saloon sign. The scene echoes a similar sequence in *Wasp* when Zoe marches her children to the pub for her date with Dave. In both films, these walking scenes precede an act of defiance. In *Wasp*, it is Zoe's determination to balance the

life of being a single mother with her own emotional desires, but for Star this scene is a threshold chronotope, a moment of transition represented by the physical and symbolic handover of responsibility for the children back to their mother. The transitory nature of the scene is reinforced by the geographical location of the saloon which is a typical edgeland site housed in an industrial unit on the outskirts of town. Star's departure from the saloon is in stark contrast to her journey there. As she runs away across the carpark, the camera remains in the doorway, replicating Misty's gaze for the spectator as we watch Star diminish in the frame. This walk echoes the young Heathcliff's angry departure from the farm in *Wuthering Heights*, and, as in that film, it is as if the spaces of the world are opening up before her. Star has grasped her chance of freedom and sets off on her own journey to Kansas City.

Further left-to-right tracking accompanies Star when she walks from the Williston house, where the crew are staying, to the garden where she meets Jake to have sex. Here, as before, left-to-right camera movement tracks a journey which becomes an escape from domestic space. However, in other walking scenes there is some weighting towards right-to-left tracking. As they walk towards their first attempted sale, Star and Jake are framed in a hand-held shot that switches from behind them to a diagonal right-to-left track, culminating in a 50-second right-to-left shot in which Jake describes his sales philosophy. Furthermore, as described above, Star's frustrated exit from the scene of their first attempted sale not only breaks up the geometric and temporal grammar of the film, but is also captured in a 20-second track from right-to-left.

The reversal of what Hayward suggests is the traditional road movie convention accompanies moments of uncertainty and indecision, but there are also scenes in which the two forms of tracking are combined. After the scene in which

she is admonished by Krystal for her failure to secure a sale, Star walks with Jake and keeps a cool distance. Whilst the camera tends towards a left-to-right track when Star and Jake are in the frame together, it cuts to the reverse when Star is alone in the shot, thus matching her own mood of resistance. Later in the film, after Star's success with the truck driver, she is tracked in a 25-second right-to-left shot before she treads into the remains of a road-kill, a movement which takes her from the pleasure of her sale to the sensation of being unclean, the rotting carcass and blood a sign of her feelings of abjection.

Ultimately, whilst Varda's use of right-to-left tracking in *Vagabond* is a reversal of traditional conventions that is concomitant with that film's narrative reversal, Arnold's use of tracking is less consistent, more playful, highlighted in the scene in which, following their encounter with a Christian housewife (Gail Sears), Jake and Star race across the suburban lawns, tracked from right-to-left track before they kiss beneath the water-sprays of activated sprinkler systems.

Whilst scenes of everyday suburban life dominate the narrative, Images of monumental space, as depicted in typical road movies, are absent from *American Honey*. In fact, only once does Arnold permit a glimpse of the sublimity of the American landscape.³⁵ This occurs during a moment when the crew stops by the side of a road which affords a view across the Badlands National Park. The scene's construction is reminiscent of similar landscape images in *Wuthering Heights*, as described in the previous chapter. Rather than utilising conventional film grammar,

³⁵ There is a moment in the film when Star encounters a wild bear. Although this indicates the fragile boundary between domestic life and the wilderness, the landscape here is secondary to the awe that is evoked.

that is, establishing place with a wider shot before cutting to reaction shots and subsequent matched eyelines, this scene begins with a close-up of a butterfly in tall grass before shifting to a blurred shot of Star and the other girls as they urinate on the ground. The soundtrack of chirping crickets, streams of urine, and the rustle of clothing being pulled up and adjusted, prioritises the haptic senses. Then, a cut to a slightly wider shot of the women from behind brings into view the rocky terrain. Initially, the shot of the women, framed from the rear with the landscape before them, recalls the Romantic image of the *Rückenfigur*, a symbol of human dominance over the landscape (see footnote 27, above). However, the camera quickly moves round, taking the spectator's eye away from the vastness of the Badlands to capture the women in profile, thus eschewing a controlling gaze. This spectacle is met with silence, suggesting a sense of awe, but the grandeur of the landscape is abased by the act of urination: a subversive moment that reduces the masculine sublime to an elemental modality. In addition, the construction of the scene is such that the spectator observes the landscape with Star and not through her. This emphasis on the sensory and the tactile suggests that this is not travel as conquest, "the devouring look of window shopping" (Bruno, 2002: 79), but travel as haptic experience.

The walking scenes in *American Honey* are themselves micro-journeys within the macro-journey of the road movie, enabling Arnold to juxtapose depictions of mundane space alongside the wider, more conventionally cinematic landscapes of America. The traditional road movie, with its emphasis on automobility, prioritises the journey and the destination which maps out the nation-space as myth, and is predicated on narratives of escape set against a crisis of masculinity. However, in *American Honey*, the journey is not a dream or an escape for the majority of the

crew: instead, it is a functional and economic necessity. Reading *American Honey* as a counter-road movie enables us to see walking scenes as a rupture of this established form. It makes visible the absences in the traditional road movie narrative by foregrounding the act of walking, and substituting an optic mastery of the landscape with one that is tactile and haptic.

Conclusion

This research began in 2014 after watching Arnold's *Red Road* and *Fish Tank*. The immediacy and the ubiquity of walking in these films, combined with the vitality of Robbie Ryan's cinematography and Arnold's artistically evocative representation of familiar images of edgelands and urban deprivation, were captivating. However, what began as a study of the edgeland aesthetic in one film, *Fish Tank* (Hanson, 2015), developed into a more detailed investigation of walking as a discrete object of study in Arnold's oeuvre, and so provoked the questions investigated in this thesis.

In recognising the centrality of walking as a chronotope, this study foregrounds the significance of walking scenes as events in themselves, thus acknowledging Çağlayan's (2020) observation that such scenes are often treated by film scholars as secondary elements that join together more important narrative events, rather than as separate subjects of analysis in themselves. However, whilst Çağlayan's refers to his work on arthouse cinema, this analysis concentrates on Arnold's more conventional narratives and characters, and thus directs the study of walking towards more mainstream film. In addition, previous studies of the cinematic flâneuse reveal how walking is identified with interiority and its psychological impact (Smyth, 2019), or for their examination of the relationship between women and space (Ceuterick, 2020; Thornham, 2019). These works explore walking as a marker of solitude and marginalisation, and do not interrogate the discrete narrative significance of walking, the essential vitality of walking as an act in itself, or its function as a means of female empowerment.

Therefore, this thesis, by examining each walking scene in detail, reveals the importance of walking as a unit of analysis, how it contributes to the transformation of both character and geographical space, and how these transformations are

expressed through the medium of film. Using Bakhtin's (1988) theory of the chronotope as a framework for interpretation enables the effective combination of both narrative and aesthetic modes of analysis. As noted, the chronotope of walking acts as a centripetal force that binds together these elements and bestows upon walking scenes not only structural significance but also thematic and contextual importance. Thus, walking scenes are analysed as a lens through which Arnold's films articulate contemporary discourses of mobility, space, and gender. Furthermore, Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope permits the analysis of a number of other recurring motifs which substantiate the importance of walking to Arnold's work: for example, chronotopes of thresholds and roads are examined to show how they illustrate key transitions in character and narrative. In addition, the liminality of such chronotopes invites a comparison with Foucault's notion of the heterotopia (1986), and this is especially relevant to the ways in which Arnold presents edgeland spaces, in addition to providing an interpretation of the functions of automobiles, particularly important in the chapter on *American Honey*.

By drawing on scholarly theories of walking, this study is positioned within an established disciplinary field. It especially recognises de Certeau's (1988) importance to debates about walking as a creative process. Drawing on his emphasis on walking as urban cartography, I have shown how Arnold's films map out the contemporary built environment and, in the process, invite perspectives of place that counter hitherto negative perceptions of locations such as edgeland sites and social housing estates. Furthermore, de Certeau's view of walking as a tactile negotiation with the streets, along with his influence on feminist studies, provides an important link to other methodologies employed in this thesis: namely, the use of

haptic theory in the textual analysis, and the identification of the haptic flâneuse as a major figure in Arnold's work.

Crucially, this thesis engages with issues of gender and class. Drawing on Sutherland and Feltey's notion of "power-to" feminist narratives (2017), it illustrates how Arnold's films present women as finding agency where there was previously none and recognising their independence not only from men, but also from restrictive social structures and abusive domestic situations. I argue throughout that it is through walking that these transformations are negotiated. In addition, by tracing studies of women and walking (for example, Mathieson, 2015), I also demonstrate how walking journeys promote social cohesion and opportunities for self-fulfilment.

Whilst women characters in the films acquire a sense of agency that enables them to transform their lives, Arnold's visual aesthetic helps audiences to reimagine quotidian landscapes as positive sites of resilience and social unity. The kinetic energy of the camera complements the atmospheric lingering images which invite the contemplation of everyday space and transform it into poetic spectacle. By engaging with affective film theory influenced by Deleuze (1992, 1994) and Marks (2002), the preceding chapters articulate the sensory impact of Arnold's style. In creating a spatial intimacy that seeks to absorb the spectator into the cinematic space, this style also infuses the chronotope with an affective intensity.

Even though Wolff (1985) asserts that there can be no such thing as a flâneuse, this thesis shows that her argument is founded upon an ocularcentric perspective that prioritises the significance of the male gaze over female subjectivity and agency. Furthermore, Wolff's definition of the flâneuse is, as noted, dependent upon binary oppositions that define the flâneuse in relation to the flâneur: that is, by what she is not rather than what she is. In addition, this study's evaluation of extant

scholarship on the flâneuse reveals that studies of the flâneuse are restricted to middle-class metropolitan characters and European or arthouse films. Where representations of the cinematic flâneuse are addressed in previous works, these are normally centred around individual films rather than a director's oeuvre (Bruno, 2002; Flanagan, 2008 and 2012). I therefore identify a gap in Film Studies scholarship by addressing representations of the flâneuse that do not conform either to established templates of sophisticated female characters, or to narratives that are set in areas of social and economic deprivation.

By drawing on the work of writers such as Bruno (2002) and Elkin (2016), alongside Nuvolati's (2014) typology of the modern flâneur/flâneuse, I argue for a new interpretation of the flâneuse fit for the contemporary built environment, demonstrating how she functions in Arnold's films. This new iteration of the flâneuse shows how walking is not solely the preserve of the bourgeoisie, but also of those characters marginalised by society. Furthermore, because of Arnold's emphasis on a sensory cinematic aesthetic, which draws attention in particular to the tactile qualities of the film image, this thesis identifies the figure of the haptic flâneuse to encapsulate the relationship between walking, women's agency, and the contemporary built environment. The term haptic flâneuse draws on Bruno's notion of the spectatrix, which, as noted, describes female spectators' experiences of film as a means of acquiring an optic gaze (1993, 2002), and combines it with Marks theory of haptic visuality. As noted, both writers state that haptic visuality is also a feminist strategy of reading film (Bruno, 2002; Marks, 2000). Consequently, this study positions Bruno's spectatrix not in front of the cinematic screen but as part of the film world. Thus, by combining Arnold's haptic aesthetic with feminist theories of agency (for example, del Rio, 2008; Sutherland and Feltey, 2017), it positions the haptic flâneuse as a

means of transforming our understanding of women and walking in contemporary mainstream cinema.

Through a detailed analysis of the films, I explain how the walking chronotope synergises the elements of narrative, characterisation, and film aesthetics in addition to the films' contextual implications, by which I mean the social, historical, and cultural discourses that illuminate the representations of bodies, mobility, and space. In chapter two, I trace the development of walking as an important narrative and spatial element in Arnold's short films. For example, in *Milk*, walking transports Hetty (played by Lynda Steadman) from the confines of her domestic interior to the freedom of the open road; in *Dog*, walking dominates the narrative, connecting the various sites of potential threat to Leah's safety and well-being; and in *Wasp*, walking creates an opportunity for Zoe to separate the pleasure of a drink date from the constraints of domesticity. In addition, by referring to Deleuze's notion of the time-image (1992), this chapter illustrates how walking journeys reinforce the chronotopicity of the landscape through the layers of signification present in the frame.

The reading of *Red Road* in chapter three foregrounds Jackie's shift from optic to haptic flânerie which enables her engagement with the world beyond the CCTV monitors. Focussing on this transition, I also identify how threshold chronotopes reinforce the liminality of her life, from the aforementioned TV monitors to the preponderance of windows and screens evident in the *mise-en-scène*. However, rather than walking as an internalising of dislocation, Jackie is given a sense of personal control through being permitted to join together the spaces of trauma and to master the topography of a world which had hitherto functioned only as a heterotopic site of illusion and alienation.

In *Red Road*, threshold chronotopes function to enable Jackie to shift from desirous gaze to a physical engagement with the world, and likewise, chapter four examines walking precipitates Mia's descent from the interiors of vacant high-rise flats to the landscape visible beyond the window. Focussing once more on the edgeland aesthetic, this chapter demonstrates how walking enables a topography of urban space that contains both domestic and liminal sites. Here, the travellers' site becomes a place of fantasy and peril, acting as a portal through which Mia, in discovering a positive relationship with Billy, can escape the paralysis of life on a housing estate.

Chapter five considers how the walking chronotope in *Wuthering Heights* is bound up with elemental modality which foregrounds the integral relationship between bodies and nature, thereby returning the film to the themes of the source text. Furthermore, rather than the landscape providing a backdrop to the romance between Cathy and Heathcliff, as it does in previous film versions, I argue that, in Arnold's film, the moors are heterotopic sites of play. In their wandering across the moors, Heathcliff and Cathy escape the constraints of paternal and patriarchal authority, religion, and the prejudices of race and class. This chapter further illustrates how the chronotopes of thresholds and of walking demarcate the freedom of the moors and the restrictions of the film's domestic spaces, a binary opposition embodied in the characters of Heathcliff and Cathy.

Escape is a narrative consequence of walking in Arnold's films, and in *American Honey*, Star rejects the constraints of small-town life reconstructs her identity by venturing into the suburban spaces of mid-west America. Even though the dominant form of mobility in this film is the minibus, this only exacerbates the importance of walking scenes to the narrative. Focussing on the film as counter-road

movie (Lie, 2017), I argue that Star's view from the windows of the minibus reproduces the road movie as cinematic screen. Her walking journeys thus signify moments of agency and self-discovery where she continually crosses physical and experiential thresholds.

The questions posed in the introduction to this thesis asked why walking is so important to an understanding of Arnold's films, what it reveals about the complexities of her narratives and characters, and what it contributes to the representation of gender, class, and race. This previous chapters confirm walking as a major factor in understanding Arnold's presentation of women and the landscape, thus addressing a gap in scholarship pertaining to her work in a number of ways. Firstly, the walking chronotope demonstrates the structural integrity of walking in her films, by which is meant its importance in binding together story, space, and character; secondly, by identifying the figure of the haptic flâneuse, an important concept is introduced that can be applied to the study of other screen (and literary) women; thirdly, in proposing an edgelands aesthetic, it offers a way of discussing the cinematic landscape that coheres with contemporary geographical discourses that imbue such sites with aesthetic potential; finally, through its analysis of marginalised characters, this thesis refocuses the study of walking to accommodate subjects other than the privileged figures of the flâneur and the flâneuse. This work, therefore, identifies an intimacy and vitality in walking that compels the spectator to see it not only as a narrative convenience, but also as a way of providing a platform on which filmmakers such as Arnold construct new interpretations of women characters and their position in the landscape.

In an article about the films of Patrick Keiller, whose visual design, as noted, is similar to Arnold's, Iain Sinclair declares that

Any future urban cinema ... should become a cinema of vagrancy. There's no longer time for the laying of tracks, the crane, the cherry-picker: obsolescent industrial terminology. The truth of a city, divided against itself, can only be revealed ... through a series of obscure pilgrimages, days spent crawling out on to the rim of things. The transient surrealism of airport perimeter roads, warehouses and reservoirs. (1994: n.p.)

Whilst I would not go so far as to suggest Arnold's work is a "cinema of vagrancy", I identify her films as indicative of a "future urban cinema" that attends to the edgelands and marginal spaces referred to by Sinclair. The immediacy of her visual style combines with the urgency of walking scenes and narratives that celebrate the voices of those who live, as Sinclair notes, on "the rim of things". Yet her protagonists are not deadbeat losers and anti-heroes who rise heroically above the mundane to escape their destiny. Nor are they doomed to dissolve into the emptiness of a world for whom they are merely symbols of the cruelty and alienation of modern life. Instead, Arnold's protagonists are agents of change. Her films, beginning in a non-descript suburb of England in 1998 and culminating, to date, in the more affluent, though equally mundane, suburbs of the United States in 2016, exemplify a mobile and physical cinema that visualises positively the spaces that exist between the sanitised glass and steel superficialities of the contemporary world. Indeed, produced within a period of time that has witnessed the immersion into the virtual world of online social media, as well as acute environmental and ecological concerns, Arnold's work is a celebration of the physicality of walking and its transformative power. To this end, the chronotope of walking, with its emphasis on the temporal and spatial elements of film, and the narrative significance of walking as an act of agency, is an appropriate lens through which to view her work.

This is an analysis of the chronotope in a body of work from one director, and there is an acknowledgement throughout this analysis that Arnold is the creative

force behind her films. Indeed, they contain common themes and motifs (not least, walking), as well as a consistent visual style that points towards Arnold as auteur. This study has stopped short of adopting an auteurist approach, however, in recognition of the collaborative nature of filmmaking. As pointed out in the introduction, Arnold's regular cinematographer, Robbie Ryan, contributes significantly to the films' cinematic style, and this is evidenced in subsequent work he has done for other directors, such as Sally Potter (Ackroyd, 2012). However, these common themes, particularly her concern with walking as an antidote to the constraints of modern life, reveal precisely her intention to transform the way audiences respond to settings which have hitherto been dismissed as grim, unfriendly, and uninviting. Instead, through what I identify as her use of the edgeland aesthetic, she channels the spectator's gaze towards the beauty inherent in these places.

This thesis has limited its scope to Arnold's films because they demonstrate, as an entirety, the significance of walking scenes as a discrete unit of interpretation,

and the effectiveness of the walking chronotope as a method of film analysis.³⁶ However, in being the first extended analysis of the cinematic flâneuse, it also provides a signpost for future work on this topic. Further research might extend the central concern of this study by examining the chronotopic significance of walking in conventional mainstream film, and so Çağlayan's suggestion that some film directors reduce walking scenes to "walk and talk" sequences (2020: n.p.) bears further scrutiny here, and the question arises as to whether the subject of study should shift towards shorter walking sequences in mainstream film and television to scrutinise the differences between walking as a chronotope and walking as, to borrow de Certeau's linguistic analogy once more, a syndetic function. Indeed, it might even be pertinent to consider whether the phrase "walk and talk scenes" is too dismissive in that it perpetuates a cinematic hierarchy that values one film form over another.

Although walking is such a ubiquitous theme in film, it appears unaccountable that, as Smyth puts it, film studies awaits "a broad investigation into this figure [of the cinematic flâneuse]" (2019: 114, n.88). My study goes some way towards suggesting

³⁶ As noted, Arnold's work for American television, in particular HBO's *Big Little Lies* (2019) appeared subsequent to her last feature film, *American Honey*. This study focuses entirely on her short films and her cinematic output. It would be interesting to examine walking sequences in television drama she has directed, although this would be mitigated by the fact that she does not have the same artistic control in this format as she does in her film work. This is evident in that the show's producer, Jean-Marc Vallée, wrested directorial control of the series from Arnold, which meant that she was "forced to watch from the director's chair as scenes were shot in the style of her male predecessor" (O'Falt, 2019: n.p.).

a methodology for undertaking this kind of longitudinal investigation. Whilst the research here contributes to closing this gap, future work might investigate female flânerie across a number of genres, directors, or cultures, but to continue the integrity of this study, its focus should be on the chronotopicity of walking. Other promising work includes Çağlayan's 2019 symposium on slow cinema (2020) which addresses questions about walking as a discrete object of investigation in art-house and European cinema. Whilst there is traction in the study of these films, continued work on cinematic, and television walking might examine more mainstream and conventional texts.

Even though Arnold's films give voice to marginalised women, her characters are predominantly white (and able-bodied), although Arnold's recent work shows that, in her own artistic direction of travel, she is beginning to incorporate more diverse backgrounds, with the casting of black actors in *Wuthering Heights* and *American Honey*. Having addressed Arnold's representation of these characters, this study shows that the chronotope of walking, as a means of examining the impact of walking scenes on socio-political interpretations of narrative, character, and landscape, might be extended to other films. Indeed, as noted, the walking chronotope as a term has been used only once before to examine walking in works of Palestinian literature (Aljahdali, 2014), and whilst Bakhtin's work has been applied to the study of film (for example Flanagan, 2009, Naficy, 2001, and Stam, 1992), there is much scope for the walking chronotope to be applied to future work in the area of both film and literature.

The thesis began with a question directed towards Arnold's films, but also has wider social and cultural significance: it asked why we should be concerned with walking at all. Given the increased focus on walking as an activity during the social

lockdowns in response to the COVID-19 pandemic,³⁷ it feels that the quotation from Garnette Cadogan that opens this thesis is increasingly appropriate. In a world altered, possibly irrevocably, by the impact of the new coronavirus, walking has indeed provided a barometer for our society. When Britain entered its first national lockdown in March 2020, for several weeks extended mechanical forms of travel were limited by various national restrictions, whilst physical exercise was restricted to one hour a day. Suddenly, walking journeys acquired greater significance because of the time-limited circumstances allowed, and numerous blogs, Twitter feeds, and newspaper articles described fervently this newly acquired relationship with walking.³⁸

However, despite the newfound sense of liberation and wonder provoked by the apparent rediscovery of an everyday act, traditional anxieties and prejudices remain. Some still see walking as an act of transgression and rebellion by those eager to subvert the perceived imposition on the nation's democratic rights, with extended walking journeys criticised as a deviation from the norm (Pidd and Dodd, 2020: n.p.). Of more concern, and of even more relevance to this study, are those reports that describe walking for women during the lockdown as being no different to

³⁷ The term 'lockdown', whilst not new, has entered more common parlance in 2020 as a way of describing strategic state intervention to control the spread of COVID-19.

³⁸ Many people commented on how their attitudes to walking had been changed by these new restrictions. In one article, Tom Bawden reported on a survey which found that 60% of anxious adults admitted that "walking 'helped them cope' during lockdown" (2020: n.p.).

their experiences before it. Laura Bates, for example, writes about the increase in sexual harassment reported by women during their daily exercise (2020).

If, as Cadogan suggests, walking is a form of social barometer, then these responses to the global lockdown in 2020 only perpetuate the historically negative attitudes to women and their walking habits, and so this thesis remains highly pertinent. Indeed, the “Our Streets Now” movement, which campaigns to “demand the right of women and girls to feel and be safe in public space” (Anon, 2020b: n.p.) continues to grow apace, confirming, more than ever, that a woman’s experiences of the streets is different to that of a man. At the heart of this thesis then is a celebration of women’s experience of walking as resistance in the face of adversity.

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